

# County-Wide Chaplaincy

## Thanks you!

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August & September 2017

Kick, kick...Step, step...Plant poles...Deep breath...Keep my eyes riveted directly ahead on my daughter's boots.

Kick, kick...Step, step...Plant poles...Deep breath...focus—don't look up, don't look down. Keep eyes fixed.

This was my rhythm as I fought my fear of climbing up a 45° snowfield. From the bottom looking up, it appeared insurmountable to me...but I mustered up the courage, and was determined to overcome the nagging fear that wanted to dictate my movement.

*Grit (noun): firmness; unyielding courage; stamina. To be courageously persistent. Plucky.*

A dear family member recently requested prayer for more "grit" in dealing with life's situations. In my heart, I echoed her request. We all require "grit" for our unique journeys. Pretty much everyone's journey includes a few seemingly insurmountable mountains, riddled with fear, worry, frustration, exhaustion, and troubles that can consume our thoughts and sap our energy. And grit can be in short supply at times.

The early pioneers called it "pluck," displayed through their courage, endurance, and determination, as they trod, step by step, mile upon mile, along the dusty Oregon Trail. The expected, though nonetheless immensely difficult, "gritty" experience produced hard-earned grit. Today, parenting, caregiving, marriage, sickness, loss, and disappointments expose our need for grit. Often on chaplaincy calls, we care for those who have themselves been the caregiver of a disabled spouse or child, sometimes for many years. Step by step, "grit" in the making.

"Grit" has a second definition: "sand-like particles"—the "two steps forward, slide one step back" stuff I encountered recently on the face of Mt. St. Helens. Also known as the "get this grit (annoyance) out of my eye (life)," which is the typical human reaction to eliminate the pain caused by "grit." Fatigue, discouragement, dislike, and the desire of immediate removal is often the response to the hard circumstances that add to our daily experiences.

After that recent climb, an acquaintance of mine exclaimed, "It really helps to have the right gear!" I considered her statement in regard to my life's "climbs." What is my equipment? Is it reliable? Efficient? Trustworthy? Can my very life depend on what I am depending on?

On Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017, I would guess the majority of us viewed a "once in a lifetime" solar eclipse to one degree or another. The three "key players" of our world aligned, resulting in a short time of notable changes—in temperature, darkness, and the obscuring of our reliable sun, while providing a spectacular view of the corona, which surrounds the sun.

Wow! The usual brilliance of our sun obscured! What a drastic change!

Just that morning, I was amazed to read a description of God found in the book of James, in which God is described as "the giver of every good and perfect gift," and as "the Father of all [that gives] light," and that "in Him there is no change" (like the rising or setting of the sun) and no shadow, (like that of an eclipse).

No change! No shadow! No lessening! Constant and reliable!

Step by step—God knows what I need most. He will be with me as I traverse mountains and descend into valleys. He never changes! And He will provide the comfort, the hope, the healing, and

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the grit necessary to meet the changes life brings. I know Him to be completely dependable, reliable, efficient, and trustworthy.

*“Frequently, the night is dark and we seem far from home, but patience cries out, ‘Lord, lead me on and keep my feet; I don’t ask to see the distant scene—one step is enough for me.’ Faith, courage, and patience (grit) are tremendous qualities in a great life, but these take time. A life rooted in trusting God can be assured that, although time moves slowly in long drawn-out tests and trials, God’s tides move steadily on in accomplishing His great purposes.”*

- From Quests and Conquests.

Janet LaPore

### ***In our thoughts and prayers –***

***Sixteen years ago on 9-11, nearly 3000 people perished during an unprecedented terrorist attack on America. Please continue to pray for their families as well as for our nation.***

***More recently we remember to lift up in prayer the people impacted by hurricane Harvey, and in our own area, the Eagle Creek fire in the Columbia River Gorge which is currently still burning and forcing evacuations while I’m editing this letter.***

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