

The experts are calling it the age of collapse.

Every morning I wake up to a chaotic world. The stability of the past is gone. The variability of the day is palpable. Much of what we knew and took for granted is changing, unraveling, collapsing. Political instability, social inequality, economic issues, climate change, spiritual obscurity, erosion of truth, all render our world unstable and volatile.

Many of us are distraught, anxious and lost. What do we do? There is much fear toward the unknown future and deep discomfort about what's next.

Ages of collapse have happened in the past. The Bronze age collapse was a period of widespread societal collapse and decline across the Mediterranean. Major cities were destroyed, powerful empires died, trade routes shifted, cultural landscapes changed. Invasions, climate change, natural disasters, and internal strife contributed to this historical turn.

The collapse of the Bronze age made way for the beginning of the Iron age. Isn't that how life works? Ends and beginnings intertwine. Yet living during the liminal in-between time has never been easy for humans whose hearts seek stability, security and peace of mind.

I think I understand and grasp this. Collapse has happened in the past. It will happen again in the future. My own life has been filled with it as I have lived through war's violence, political upheaval, and an unknown future. Today, Syria, the country of my birth no longer exists and has a faltering future. Armenia, the country of my ancestral heritage, flounders as a small landlocked country in the hands of the powerful. Who knows what its future holds? The US, my adopted country, the champion of human rights, is in the midst of collapsing, changing, trying to birth something new.

This new is quite puzzling to me, and perhaps to you. For a person of faith committed to walk the way of Jesus, the way of grace and compassion, I wonder:

- What is new and human about the Alligator Alcatraz where humans are living in horrifying, miserable and dangerous conditions beyond my imagination?
- What is new and human about deporting humans who have been contributing members of society? Or, transporting them to jails in other countries as if they were chattel?
- What is new and human about dismantling USAID to continents that are impoverished and malnourished, to provide health care, vaccinations, and medications to save and change lives?
- What is new and human about eradicating social and health care services to those who need it most?
- What is new and human about criticizing and humiliating another of a different race, religion, color or accent?
- What is new and human about being vengeful and punishing your adversaries to get even?

There is nothing new in all of this. Humans have lived with destroying one another, withholding assistance, separating "us" and "them," killing their enemies, from the beginning of time. Humans have also lived with caring and helping one another, forgiving each other and celebrating the diversity with which their lives have been enriched. The choice is mine and yours. Jesus has already shown us the way.