

He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark.

—Genesis 8:10

MONDAY, MARCH 14

People often express surprise when I talk about the US Disaster Program's long-term recovery programs. After inquiring about a particular disaster, they often respond with some alarmed variation of, "Oh, is there still a program there?!" Recovery, I've learned, is an effort of incredible endurance.

Time doesn't seem to move uniformly after a disaster. Normal life is placed in a holding pattern as whole communities wait for federal declarations and assistance, case management approval and news about loved ones.

After the news cycle has moved on, however, the Church and its people remain. Through various ministries, people are able to offer persistent love for their hurting neighbors, as people begin to slowly find their new normal.

More than once, I have been accused of trying to live life all at once. I'm inclined to rushing and restlessness. During Lent, I try to build an awareness of this tendency and to slow down. As my pace slows, I find myself being more present and better able to care for those around me.

—Lura Steele