

Blessed be the God of our salvation: Who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.

**—Opening Acclamation during Lent,
Enriching Our Worship 1**

Alienation.

Apparently it's part of the human condition...part of the mixed bag we get along with memory, reason and skill. It's that nagging sense that we're all alone in this mess and nobody, but nobody, will be there for us.

Faith comes next. Faith, that even if our colleagues, friends and family fail us (and they sometimes will), there is someone, something bigger than we are, who will not.

Gratitude follows faith. We don't have to bear it alone. We don't have to do it alone. When disaster strikes, or illness, or loss of work, we have an advocate who bears our burdens with us. When we have botched the job, we have an advocate who forgives us and encourages us to do better the next time.

Claire Joy