

# Groggs in Dominica

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01/01/2024

Vol. 4 – Issue 1

## *The Christmas Season Happiest Time of Year?*

Certainly not here in Dominica. Jason and I both noticed the lack of Christmas music and cheer. People and businesses decorated, but it seemed shallow and rote.

I'm sure some of it has been the wear of the year; people are broke and tired. Prices of everything but their wages are going up. Even the government workers are getting a raise, but not the commoner. In most families, every able adult works, some have second jobs and side hustles on top of that.

There have been island-wide water and electrical issues this year, an increase in vehicular accidents and crime. A current high-profile case is against two Americans accused of murdering their neighboring Canadian couple. It's really quite sad.

After Christmas and New Year comes Carnival. This, we've been told, is what Dominicans are actually looking forward to, this precursor to Lent, this time of debauchery, drunkenness and orgies.

## *Our Year in Review Growth & Learning*

I would definitely say the theme for 2023 was Trust. Trusting God, trusting His timing, His plan, His will. There's also been the waiting, waiting to see God's plan and learning to wait patiently and expectantly.

We know God causes all things to happen. That includes the things we'd rather not have happened. However, God has promised that all things will work out for the good of those who love Him and have been called according to His purposes.

This past year, His purposes appear to have cost us a lot. We found ourselves betrayed, harassed, arrested, separated, thrown in jail, put in prison, friendships severed, financially broke, and some of us, severely stressed. It has cost not just us, but family and friends in the States as well. Personally, I'd rather not think about it, I'd prefer not to remember.

Nevertheless, we are told to count it all joy when we meet trials of various kinds, for we know that the testing of our faith produces steadfastness. We are told to let that steadfastness have its full effect, that we may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. That can't happen if we forget.

What good has God's purposes brought us then? Did we experience growth in 2023? Leaps and bounds. Did we learn? Exponentially. Are there any regrets? Yes. While I selfishly wish the pain had never happened, I know for a fact I would not have grown into a more mature Christian if these things had not happened.

I believe almost all of us are in a better place in our relationship

## ... PRAISE ...

- We made it through another year.
- We're all healthy.
- Tremendous spiritual growth.
- The IndyStar picked up and published our story.
- Nathan captured/rescued four chicks. The hen vanished.
- It's not snowing. :D

## ... PRAYER ...

- Nathan's 4 chicks to stay healthy.
- Continued trust in God
- Application of Scripture in our lives.
- Safety, as the girls start helping out a friend at her shop again.
- Financial needs
- Favor with Customs
- Truth and Justice to be had
- To be free of court matters in or before February.
- God to show us where He wants us and what He wants us doing.

*To God be the glory,  
great things He has  
done!*



with Jesus and dependency upon God now. We have been refined, even just a little bit.

### *Joy, Sorrow, and Peace They go hand in hand.*

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Our loss is not the final word.

Count your blessings, name them one by one, rejoicing and giving thanks for what God has done. In the midst of sorrow, this helps bring my mind and my heart back to Christ. We can be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, having “nothing,” and yet possessing everything. Hope isn’t found in our circumstances or what we have. Hope is in Christ alone and that brings peace. Jesus left His peace with us, saying “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

With peace, comes joy. As the BibleProject states, joy is an attitude God’s people adopt, not because of their circumstances but because of their hope in God’s love and promise. The joy of God’s people is not determined by their struggles but their future destiny. When you believe that Jesus’ love has overcome death itself, joy becomes reasonable even in the darkest of circumstances.

### *Looking Toward 2024 What does God have in store?*

The key word (or, Person) is GOD. What does HE have in store? Honestly, we just don’t know. January 2024 finds us in no different circumstances than 2023. Jason is still on bail

awaiting his February 7<sup>th</sup> court date. There is no word from Customs regarding a meeting with them. (For some reason though, they must have thought they scheduled one because they sent a letter to our lawyer claiming we missed it.)

The six of us are still residing in a happy, little, two-bedroom, roughly 560 sq. ft. apartment (thankfully with a back “porch” and access to the flat roof). We have no income to speak of and are relying on the benevolence of family and some friends, for whom we are extremely grateful. (We received a free ham shortly after Christmas!)

As we wake each morning, we thank the Lord for another day. We ask for strength to live for Him in obedience, willingness, and submission to His will.

No matter what we face this year, God is for us, He is with us and will never leave us. He will grow us, guard us, and guide us. May the Lord’s name be praised!

### *Jesus is King!*

Until next time,  
the *Groggs*

*“God is God. If He is God, He is worthy of my worship and my service. I will find rest nowhere but in His will, and that will is infinitely, immeasurably, unspeakable beyond my largest notions of what He is up to.”*

~ Elisabeth Elliot



*Some of the crocheted wash clothes I made to hand out at Christmas.*



*Nathan and one of his four chicks.*



*Since Customs has all our Christmas decorations, Elijah, Hannah and I made paper Christmas trees.*



*Christmas cookies made with Hershey Kisses, given by a friend.*

