



Advent Reflection for Friday, December 15, 2023

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Isaiah 51:12-16

I, I am he who comforts you;
why then are you afraid of a mere mortal who must die,
a human being who fades like grass?
You have forgotten the Lord, your Maker,
who stretched out the heavens
and laid the foundations of the earth.
You fear continually all day long
because of the fury of the oppressor,
who is bent on destruction.
But where is the fury of the oppressor?
The oppressed shall speedily be released;
they shall not die and go down to the Pit,
nor shall they lack bread.
For I am the Lord your God,
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—
the Lord of hosts is his name.
I have put my words in your mouth
and hidden you in the shadow of my hand,
stretching out the heavens
and laying the foundations of the earth
and saying to Zion, “You are my people.”

Today's Reflection is by Ellen Correia Golay

This fall I had the pleasure of attending baptism and confirmation classes with the Mothers in preparation for the baptism of my sons and my own confirmation. In these classes, I have often wrestled with what it means to “feel God.” I have been asked what it feels like when God is with me, or to recount times that I have felt God. I have often been at a loss as to how to respond to these questions. How do you know if you feel God? What does that feel like? How do I know if God is with me? I think for some, “feeling God” is a straightforward experience they have had from their youngest years, but for me it has remained a mystery.

As I reflected on this reading, I noticed how in several places it discusses God's role in nature and in creating the earth. For example, the phrase, “The Lord, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth,” and the phrase, “For I am the Lord your God who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar...”

And if I think hard, while I really struggle with the idea of “feeling God”, when I am in nature, I do feel something that reminds me of the divine. The wonder of watching a geyser shoot 100 feet into the air at Yellowstone National Park. The exhilaration of diving into the ocean waves crashing at Rockaway Beach in Queens. The simple pleasure of noting the changing of the seasons in Prospect Park on my regular walks with my dog. I find in these times, I have a special sort of feeling, where things seem just beautiful and perfect. Maybe the solution to the mystery of “feeling God” for me should be spending less time worrying about what it should feel like and spending more time taking note of those instances when the world feels beautiful and perfect.



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