

peace be with you

weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

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GIFTS OF SILENCE

Prayerfully stepping into the forest
a sense of intrigue seeps into my
sapped-out muscles and bones.

The chatter of the warblers brings the first
smile to my face as I recall humans
whose voices reflect their
lively conversation.

Next my attention is drawn to the crows
attempting to direct others with
their commanding voices
and arrogant swagger.

Certainly, this stunning cooper's hawk
appears to be ignoring the crows.
From the branch of a bare
birch tree she invites us
closer to gaze at her beauty,
then shyly flies away.

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Exodus 34:29-35

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.

When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him.

But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them.

Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face;

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GIFTS OF SILENCE

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Woodpeckers show politeness in knocking on tree trunks, seeking to make new friends and awaiting a cheerful "hello!"

The Canada geese choir congregates in the sun on the icy blue lake to chant Psalms of praise, a joyful call to prayer.

Crunching sounds track us on a parallel trail before one suave red fox swiftly crosses in our view. Only then dare I catch my breath.

Today, winter has revisited with her *gifts of silence* offering. My heart is prepared to abide with the Holy One beside me.

What good things come our way when we anticipate the splendid things in life and watch for how God will open our eyes to love.

Be Unafraid

When appreciating nature, it enables us to slowly release thoughts of difficulties in life. Living with the pandemic and the situation in the Ukraine can worsen mental and physical health issues. They may lead to a sense that life is an uphill climb and that God is distant.

Exodus 34:29-35

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but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

However, when we relax and enjoy reading, dancing, or singing with gusto, we find more joy in life. Once fabric is quilted into something even more beautiful, after wood is crafted into a piece to behold, or painters create simple beauty...it is as though each person is co-creating with the Spirit of God. Can you picture faces are shining with pleasure as appreciation is given?

Wherever you are in life, may you be unafraid to shine in witnessing to our God's love. Take a deep breath, listen, and follow the voice in your heart that guides you to love and spread peace to your little corner of the world and beyond.

Open your hearts & allow God to love you,

Marta

Rev. Marta Wheeler