

peace be with you

weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

Smoky Mountains Call

In the instant we were thrust through the entrance of the tall iron gates a realization came over me of just how quiet my present life has become and how jarring chaos can seem to me.

The further we walked, the more I pulled back from the various music blasted from competing storefronts selling coffees, teas, brews, and bright souvenirs.

Most pleasing is the bluegrass music enjoyed from rocking chairs & then the quietude of the slowly spinning Ferris Wheel and reflective conversation.

Yet for years to come my heart will return to the Smoky Mountain trail where autumn leaves adorn the landscape and chilly morning hikes made warmer with an alpaca wool scarf tied about my neck.

Continued

October 19, 2022

Psalm 84:1-7

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord of heavenly forces! My very being longs, even yearns, for the Lord's courtyards. My heart and my body will rejoice out loud to the living God!

Yes, the sparrow too has found a home there; the swallow has found herself a nest where she can lay her young beside your altars, Lord of heavenly forces, my king, my God! Those who live in your house are truly happy; they praise you constantly.

Those who put their strength in you are truly happy; pilgrimage is in their hearts. As they pass through the Baca Valley, they make it a spring of water. Yes, the early rain covers it with blessings. They go from strength to strength, until they see the supreme God in Zion.

Sermon-By-Phone

402-210-2091

Each week, a timely message and scripture are available simply by making a phone call!

Smoky Mountains Call

Continued

Huffing and puffing, we greet
hundreds of people of all ages
on the same earthly journey seeking clean
air
and stunning views from higher altitudes.

Once again, I'll settle into
the saddle of the old paint called Lofty
who cautiously plods over rocks with
no worries of keeping up with younger
ones.

Oh, the gift of Creator
and my special daughter who follows the
yearning for lovely dwelling places.
The two of us as one meditating.

Inner Peace

Last week I was continually amazed by
the beauty of the Smoky Mountains in
their peak autumn season. My daughter
and I observed the colors changing from
hour to hour each of the four days we
spent there. The most difficult thing was
leaving the mountains after spending all
day immersed in creation. I wanted to go
for a hike after riding horses for 90
minutes! However, a lemon custard ice
cream cone followed by a nap turned out
to be a better idea.

Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, once
wrote,

*"The sweep and serenity of a landscape,
fields, and hills, are enough to keep a
contemplative riding the quiet interior
tide of one's peace and desire for hours
at a time."*

(New Seeds of Contemplation, p. 243)

Now that I've returned to Nebraska, I will go through the glory of the changing of seasons
once again with you.

Each transformed plant and tree speak to our inner being of God's love and forgiveness.
How is it that you have touched that inner beauty within yourself?

We pray that resting in the wonder of creation will indeed make you feel more grateful,
hopeful, and peaceful.

God's autumn blessings upon you!

Marta

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Saint Paul Benson