



peace be with you
weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

Winds Sing

On days named
beautiful by most
the stand of tall spruce

remain still
keeping guard over
the arboretum
silent on the hill.

Now this day
the wind sways grown-ups
side to side like licorice

gusts power
through the thickest of
pines, sound waves composing
roaring woodwind

orchestration
created and conducted
by almighty God.

Energizing my
innermost being
I'm astonished yet
eventually

blown down the path
only to rise again and
listen intently

unidentifiable
memories stir up
that I cannot clearly
voice through language
except this
awesome life force makes
me feel very alive

distinctly
exceptionally
grateful to God.

April 19, 2023

Encounter on the Emmaus Road

Luke 24:13-24, 28-32

13-16 That same day two of them were walking to the village Emmaus, about seven miles out of Jerusalem. They were deep in conversation, going over all these things that had happened. In the middle of their talk and questions, Jesus came up and walked along with them. But they were not able to recognize who he was.

17-18 He asked, "What's this you're discussing so intently as you walk along?"

They just stood there, long faced, like they had lost their best friend. Then one of them, his name was Cleopas, said, "Are you the only one in Jerusalem who hasn't heard what's happened during the last few days?"

19-24 He said, "What has happened?"

They said, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene. He was a man of God, a prophet, dynamic in work and word, blessed by both God and all the people. Then our high priests and leaders betrayed him, got him sentenced to death, and crucified him. And we had our hopes up that he was the One, the One about to deliver Israel. And it is now the third day since it happened. But now some of our women have completely confused us. Early this morning they were at the tomb and couldn't find his body. They came back with the story that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Some of our friends went off to the tomb to check and found it empty just as the women said, but they didn't see Jesus."

28-31 They came to the edge of the village where they were headed. He acted as if he were going on but they pressed him: "Stay and have supper with us. It's nearly evening; the day is done." So he went in with them. And here is what happened: He sat down at the table with them. Taking the bread, he blessed and broke and gave it to them. At that moment, open-eyed, wide-eyed, they recognized him. And then he disappeared.

32 Back and forth they talked. "Didn't we feel on fire as he conversed with us on the road, as he opened up the Scriptures for us?"

Last Sunday evening I had to talk myself into walking outdoors because very strong winds were active. And yet there were so many gifts that I ended up writing a poem to recall, process, and share the experience.

In the gospel reading, two followers of Jesus were feeling quite downcast in the week following his death. When Jesus joined them on the road to Emmaus something held them back from knowing he was with them. I get that. My mind can certainly prevent me from seeing Jesus at my side when hearing of the next mass shooting of innocent people, global wars, lost people, and both the wonder and frightening aspects of artificial intelligence. Neglecting to trust in God, I miss the signs that would bring consolation and soothe the pain. As John Buchanan wrote,

And yet Easter comes.

*We believe that although bullies, thugs, and murderers seem to be winning,
peace and justice will prevail at the end of the day.*

*We dare to believe that the long arc of history, as Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us,
is toward freedom, equality, kindness, justice, and love.*

When at the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before his death, Jesus asked nothing of his disciples but to stay with him and pray. Yet they were too exhausted and fell asleep. We find that Jesus did not focus on that act of betrayal, the loneliness he must have felt when most broken.

A week later we find him demonstrating the necessity for human connections. These two walkers ask the Risen Christ to stay with them. And he does! It is in the simple act of breaking the bread and drinking the wine together that their senses are engaged, and they recognize him.

May our hearts feel on fire as Christ walks along with us through the reading of the scriptures and personal relationships. Open your hearts to the Paschal Mystery of transformation and renewal!

We hold you in the Light and Love of Christ,

Marta

Rev. Marta Wheeler