

December 7, 2023



Daily Reflections

HOUSE OF FAITH

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's Gospel

Jesus said to his disciples: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listened to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined."

MATTHEW 7:21, 24-27

Reflection

Growing up, my Mom was a weather-bug, constantly listening to weather

forecasts and later, keeping the TV on the Weather Channel. This was an ongoing experience of amusement among us siblings when we visited Mom as adults. I have to say, Mom rubbed off on me as I, too, am a weather-bug (if you could see my iPad now and the number of weather apps on it – you would be amused)!

It is very easy for me to picture storms that wash away homes and businesses as I've watched my fair share of Top Ten weather disasters – once again on the Weather Channel. When I juxtapose my house of faith with these storms, I shudder, because just as the waves erode sandy beaches, so too can my own complacency erode what undergirds my faith.

Advent allows time to reflect and assess my “house of faith.” Has the soil (my commitment to prayer) started to erode? Has sand (sin) seeped in and found a home? When the rains come (life's curves and pitfalls), can I withstand these challenges? Advent gives us this time to quiet ourselves, connect more deeply with the Beloved, and nurture our relationships with one another.

At one point in my own life, depression set in. At this time, I found my house was built on rock because despite not sensing God's presence, deep within the marrow of my being, I knew God was present. By being diligent and committed to tending to my relationship with God, I trusted in his presence even in my inner darkness. Advent is a wonderful time to re-commit to our relationships with God and others. And remember to be watchful! Be present! Prepare your house ... for we dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives.



House in the stones
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

- If you were to draw a picture of your house (spiritually speaking), what would it look like? On what ground is your house resting? If you have the time, draw this figurative house and name the rocks of faith that support you (think gifts of the Holy Spirit).
 - How are you as you begin this Season of Advent? Are storms brewing? Are the winds of change too strong? Are you feeling buffeted by life itself? Reflect on all aspects of your life (relationship with God, relationship with self, relationship with others, family, friends, ministry/work, faith community, etc.). What is one way you can add support to your life today that helps you withstand the fierce elements of simply striving to live life more fully?
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For Prayer

*O God,
may we be agents of change for positive transformation
in our lives and in the lives of those with whom we live and work.*

*May this time of Advent bring a refreshing sense
of expectation, hope, joy, peace, and love.
May our desire to keep our houses of faith strong
be coupled with the gentle presence of your abiding love.
Amen.*

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