

April 24, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH EASTER

Photo by Tomas Williams from Pexels

SIMPLE GIFTS

By Julie Mussché

*“’Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be;
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.”*

JOSEPH BRACKETT, 1848

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Reflection

I wonder sometimes if we might complicate the spiritual experience. Are Grace-filled moments like a musical crescendo, moving with drama and flourish, or do they provide a gentle accompaniment to the day-to-day? A bit of both? We do seem to focus on the more extraordinary events, and they are reported across denominational boundaries. Generally, they might be described as brief glimpses or brushes with the Sacred. They can involve sensory, intuitive,

kinetic, or transcendent encounters that are difficult to describe or categorize.

With aging, I've noticed that my spiritual life has involved simplified expectations of extravagance. In fact, some of the more profound sparks of the holy occur while sipping a bit of coffee along with munching a nicely toasted and buttered slice of bread. The richness of creation, after all, pulses through every morsel; there is a posture of gratitude and awe in that acknowledgement.

Another example, at a recent Seder, there were a number of children participating. Several had prepared their own *Haggadah* (a text containing the order of the Seder), with great emphasis on the ten plagues. In general, they ran with great abandon around the yard where the Passover was taking place, giggling, and having a great time playing and engaging in the stories as motivated. What a joyful witness, to be among multiple generations and being wrapped in the warmth of community, ritual, and delight.

The song *Simple Gifts* seems to capture the essence of spiritual experience. It was meant to be sung as well as danced to communally. Perhaps it could be called a "Psalm Americana." A plain and recognizable melody, the Shaker song has been borrowed and sung by many including as a part of composer Aaron Copeland's *Appalachian Spring*. If you have some time today, search out the song on YouTube and just rest in the melody and words.



Photo by Olesksandr Pidvalnyi from Pixabay

For Pondering

- Where have you discovered God in simple delights?
- How do you meet those moments with awe, delight, and gratitude?

Closing Prayer

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

*Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.*

*For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.*

PSALM 100:1-2; 5

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Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street, Orange, CA 92868 (714) 744-3175

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