

Daily Reflections



"AM I MY BROTHER'S GUARDIAN?"

By Sr. Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Today's First Reading

The man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." Next, she bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the soil. In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the soil, while Abel, for his part, brought one of the best firstlings of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not. Cain greatly resented this and was crestfallen. So, the LORD said to Cain: "Why are you so resentful and crestfallen? If you do well, you can hold up your head; but if not, sin is a demon lurking at the door: his urge is toward you, yet you can be his master."

Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out in the field." When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" The LORD then said: "What have you done! Listen: your brother's blood cries out to me from the soil! Therefore, you shall be banned

from the soil that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. If you till the soil, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a restless wanderer on the earth."

Cain said to the LORD: "My punishment is too great to bear. Since you have now banished me from the soil, and I must avoid your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, anyone may kill me at sight." "Not so!" the LORD said to him. "If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged sevenfold." So the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest anyone should kill him at sight.

Adam again had relations with his wife, and she gave birth to a son whom she called Seth. "God has granted me more offspring in place of Abel," she said, "because Cain slew him."

GENESIS 4:1-15, 25

Reflection

In the story of the beginning of humankind we see one brother turn against his brother. Cain, the firstborn, was the tiller of the soil and Abel, the younger brother, was the keeper of the sheep. In time, they both wanted to offer the LORD a gift of their labor: Cain gave the first fruits of the soil and Abel gave the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. As the story unfolds, the LORD preferred the gift of Abel over the gift of Cain, and this led Cain to hold resentment against his younger brother. The LORD saw the disappointment in Cain and conversed with him, trying to help Cain realize that temptation was crouching at the door of his heart, and that Cain could be the master of this evil thought. The LORD cared about Cain's hurt feelings and tried to help him look at the situation differently.

After Cain killed his brother in the field, the LORD asked him, "Where is your brother?" This was not a question about the location of Abel, but a question of concern for Cain's innocent next of kin. Cain's flippant answer showed his disregard for his brother, "**Am I my brother's keeper?**" The response from the Creator was "**Listen, your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground!**" Then followed the punishment to Cain that the soil would no longer give its strength to him. A repentant Cain later asked the LORD for protection.



"Cain and Abel" by Niall McAuley is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.
To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/?ref=openverse>.

For Pondering

In this story of the first murder, I often think of the words of our Creator saying to Cain and to us, "Listen, your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground ... which opened its mouth to receive his blood from your hand." How many times has the sacred ground of Mother Earth received the blood of innocent people in wars and famines and disasters caused by climate change and by a disregard for the fate of our innocent brothers and sisters and those who follow us in the years to come? Can you hear the cry?

For Prayer

A Prayer for the World

*Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held
and nurtured over generations.*

Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.

Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows.

Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.

Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly.

So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color.

Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness.

So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors.

*And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our
neighbors.*

*Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with
beauty.*

And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.

Amen.

RABBI HAROLD S. KUSHNER

**If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make
a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!**

Support CSD



Center for
Spiritual
Development

COMPANIONS ON THE
SACRED JOURNEY



[Visit Website](#)

[714-744-3172](tel:714-744-3172)

[Join Mailing
List](#)



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street | Orange, CA 92868 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)