

September 8, 2024



Daily Reflections

Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

FEAR NOT!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's First Reading

Thus says the Lord: Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing. Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe. The burning sands will become pools and the thirsty ground, springs of water.

ISAIAH 35:4-7a

Reflection

I chose to reflect on this first reading from Isaiah today because the imagery sparked so much within me. I'm going to break open each section of this short reading and share with you where my prayer went.

In the very first sentence the Lord is instructing us to speak to those who are

frightened and to “fear not!” My immediate reaction was, thank goodness we can recognize those who are frightened and take the time to reassure them. How often do you and I stop to assist those who are afraid – no matter if their fear is grounded or irrational? Fear is fear -- and to live in fear is a terrible way to move through life. We can offer comfort, presence, and the gift of faith to those who are struggling in life. We can be a reassuring presence to others when life becomes too burdensome and chaotic. Let us each bring the light of God into another's darkness as this very first sentence encourages us to do.

As I reflected on “streams will burst forth in the desert ... the burning sands will become pools and the thirsty grounds, springs of water,” I asked, “What if this entire passage is about moving out of fear and grounding ourselves in our faith where nothing can shake us?” Have you, at some point in your life, been wracked by fear? Perhaps it was a time of sensing God was far away, and you felt cut off from the source of all life and experienced yourself in an inner darkness that permeated your entire being. How did you find your way out of this darkness?

When I experience fear, (though I rarely use the word “fear”), or when I experience a deep void or emptiness within, I do call to mind this passage. “Fear not” -- because it reminds me that our Beloved is always with us. It is in faith that I remain grounded in hope and can see that flicker of light and sense the Holy Spirit within and around me. It is in remembering this that I can once again settle into a sense of being connected to God -- no matter what might be happening in life.

Before ending this reflection, I want to mention the vivid imagery of burning sands becoming pools of water. This is a beautiful portrayal of what I experience when I put my trust in the Lord and seek those pools of life-giving water found in my relationship with the Beloved. It is prayer, and friendships with those who are a part of my life, that enable fear to find no home in me.



Waterfall, Snow
Photo by cerimorgs

For Pondering

- Recall a time when you have been fearful, doubting, or experiencing a sense of separation from God or those close to you. How did you find

your way back to God or your loved ones? Was it prayer? Speaking with a spiritual companion? Journaling? What helps you remain in right relationship with God and others?

- Take an inventory of what or who you can turn to when times of doubt, fear, or separation come your way. Remind yourself how it is in and through God that we have the fullness of life.
- Perhaps this first reading speaks to you in other ways. Take a moment and read the passage slowly and break open whatever surfaces within you.

For Prayer

*We pray for all those experiencing fear, doubt, loneliness,
and longing in their lives.*

May we find ways to be gentle conduits of your presence and mercy, O God.

*Help us in slowing down our pace in life as we strive to be companions
on the journey, attentive to the needs of those around us.*

Amen.

**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

[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](#)