

June 25, 2025

Daily Reflections



SACRED PLACES II

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

“The sacred place, in short, takes root in that which may form the substance of our daily lives, but is transformed by the imagination to that which is awe-inspiring and grand.”

BELDEN C. LANE. LANDSCAPES OF THE SACRED: GEOGRAPHY AND NARRATIVE IN AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY. (29)

Reflection

The following day, our travelling community bid farewell to New Orleans and headed west, skirting the Bayous of the Gulf Coast on our way to Texas. Our destination for the day's drive was San Antonio, which would take about eight hours. The Gulf Coast is uniquely beautiful with intricate waterways and trees punctuating the horizon, so while the drive was lengthy it proffered beauty and an exceptional landscape to observe. Of course, we would need to break for

refueling and stretch stops along the way.

We stopped a couple of times, and at each respite, one thing really popped out to me as we entered each place. Set among the overpasses were multitudes of homeless communities. Initially, I thought this must be an anomaly, but as I paid more attention to underpasses while driving through towns, this seemed to be a harsh reality of the life and times of our country. I am certainly familiar with the homeless communities in Southern California, but for some reason, this seemed different. Maybe because the communities were located on the margins, the fringes of urban areas, the visual context seemed starker than what I had seen in the past. True to form, the same thing occurred as we made our way into San Antonio.

In college, one of the individuals who influenced my study of social geography was architect, urban designer, and geographer Grady Clay. He coined the term “urban sink” to qualify those areas in a city that are “sunk” or depressed, where the physical and social “rubble” is intentionally placed or left by economic or geographic marginalization. The overpasses seemed to fall into this definition, undesirable areas serving as shelter that are separated from other parts of an urban area by social and physical barriers.

It is estimated that there are up to three quarters of a million people without housing in the United States living in shelters, substandard structures, or on the street. Over the last several years, from 2022 to 2024, the number of unsheltered homeless has increased by 32% (Department of Housing and Urban Development) driven by economic inequity, rising housing, medical and living costs and diminished economic opportunity. Overpasses, parks, streets, river beds, beaches, bus benches, all places for the growing marginalized.

What has come to my attention is that the urban sinks holding the homeless are sacred space. God walks on the margins. This is awe striking and soulfully jarring. Where and how are we called to pilgrimage on the margins? Where is God beckoning you?



Tents on a Street
Photo by Milan Cobanov

For Prayer

You are invited to spend some time with this passage, a Lectio Divina:

Read the passage several times; let the words settle in.

Pray and have a conversation with God about the reading.

Meditate on and savor the sacred entry the words offer.

Contemplate and just be with the moment and God.

Act as so called.

And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

*“Blessed are you who are poor,
for the kingdom of God is yours.*

*Blessed are you who are now hungry,
for you will be satisfied.*

*Blessed are you who are now weeping,
for you will laugh.*

*Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude and insult you,
and denounce your name as evil
on account of the Son of Man.*

*Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in
heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.”*

LUKE 6:20-23

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