

February 20, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

BE FRUITFUL!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's First Reading and Responsorial Psalm

*Thus says the LORD: Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down
And do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and
fruitful, Giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats, So
shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; It shall not return to me
void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.*

ISAIAH 55:10-11

From all their distress God rescues the just.

*Glorify the LORD with me, let us together extol his name. I sought the LORD,
and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.*

*Look to him that you may be radiant with joy, and your faces may not blush
with shame.*

When the poor one called out, the LORD heard, and from all his distress he

saved him.

The LORD has eyes for the just, and ears for their cry. The LORD confronts the evildoers, to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.

When the just cry out, the LORD hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.

PSALM 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19

Reflection

This short passage from Isaiah is rich in metaphor and meaning. The meaning behind the metaphor of snow and rain reveals that what is given from above, from God, is meant to nourish and enrich. Snow and rain enable the earth to flourish, making the soil fertile and the harvest abundant. The movement from this metaphor to the Word of God reminds us that it is our lived response to the Word of God that shows our faith and trust in God. It is God's Word that gives life to us.

Staying with this metaphor, the Word of God nourishes us just as snow and rain nourish the earth. We flourish in our faith when we take in the Word of God and integrate it into our life in real and practical ways. This passage points to our encounter with God in his Word proclaimed during liturgy, as well as when we receive the Eucharist. It is the Bread we eat! If the earth is devoid of rain and snow, the earth withers and dies. Without God in our lives, our faith will wither and die.

The responsorial psalm flows from the meaning in Isaiah in that when we glorify God with our lives, we give testimony to the love of God within us. We give testimony to our faith in action as we tend to the needs of our brothers and sisters. It is ensuring we do not return "void," as the passage in Isaiah reminds us.

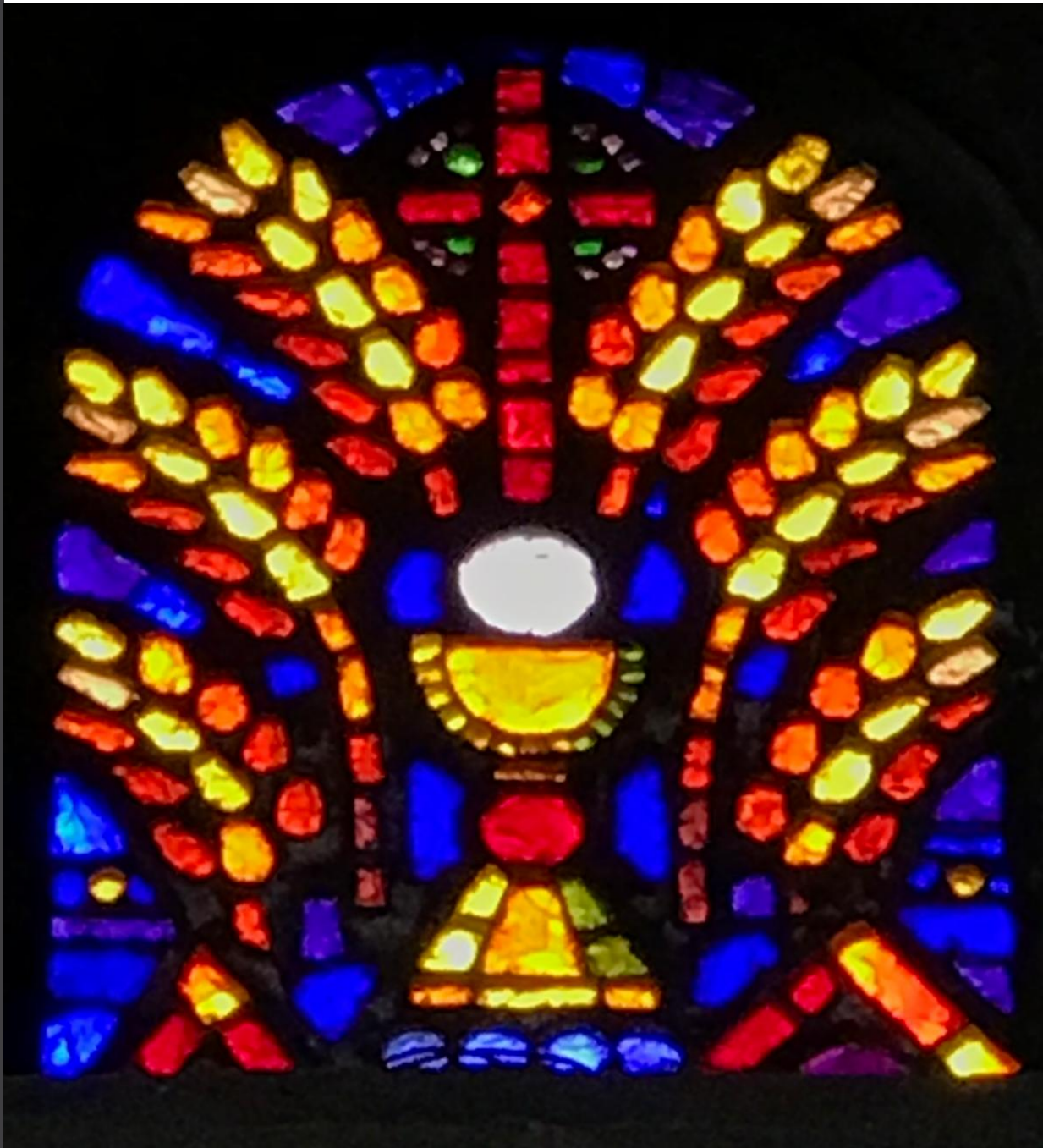
We "look to him that we may be radiant with joy" because it is through God that we live and have our being. When we open ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit's movement and grace in our lives, we give testimony to our love and faith in God. It is our witness and living our faith each day that speaks to our love of God and all of creation.

Be Fruitful!

Be fruitful, O life within me. Seek the snow and rain of God's living Word.
Desire what is of God and turn from all that leads me astray.

Be fruitful, O mind of wonder. Allow God's revelatory text to capture our
imagination, wonder, and awe. May we be inspired by God's unfolding in all of
life.

Be fruitful, O heart of love. Be so filled with God's infinite love that we become
conduits of this love poured out in service to the dear neighbor.



LePuy, France
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

- As you reflect on your life today, what testimony or message are others receiving about your belief and faith in God?
 - The first stanza in today's psalm reads, "I sought the Lord, and he answered me." How are you seeking the Lord during this season of Lent?
 - The final stanza in today's psalm reads, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." How does this sentence speak to you? How might you tend to those who are "crushed in spirit"?
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For Prayer

*Creator God,
as we continue our Lenten journey today,
may we be mindful of the power and gift of your Word.
May we be conduits of your love
gently outpoured through our encounters with others this day.
Amen.*

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