

August 16, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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FOR THIRTY DAYS THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WEPT FOR MOSES

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

Today's First Reading

Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, the headland of Pisgah which faces Jericho, and the LORD showed him all the land—Gilead, and as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, the circuit of the Jordan with the lowlands at Jericho, city of palms, and as far as Zoar. The LORD then said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that I would give to their descendants. I have let you feast your eyes upon it, but you shall not cross over." So there, in the land of Moab, Moses, the servant of the LORD, died as the LORD had said; and he was buried in the ravine opposite Beth-peor in the land of Moab, but to this day no one knows the place of his burial. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated. For thirty days the

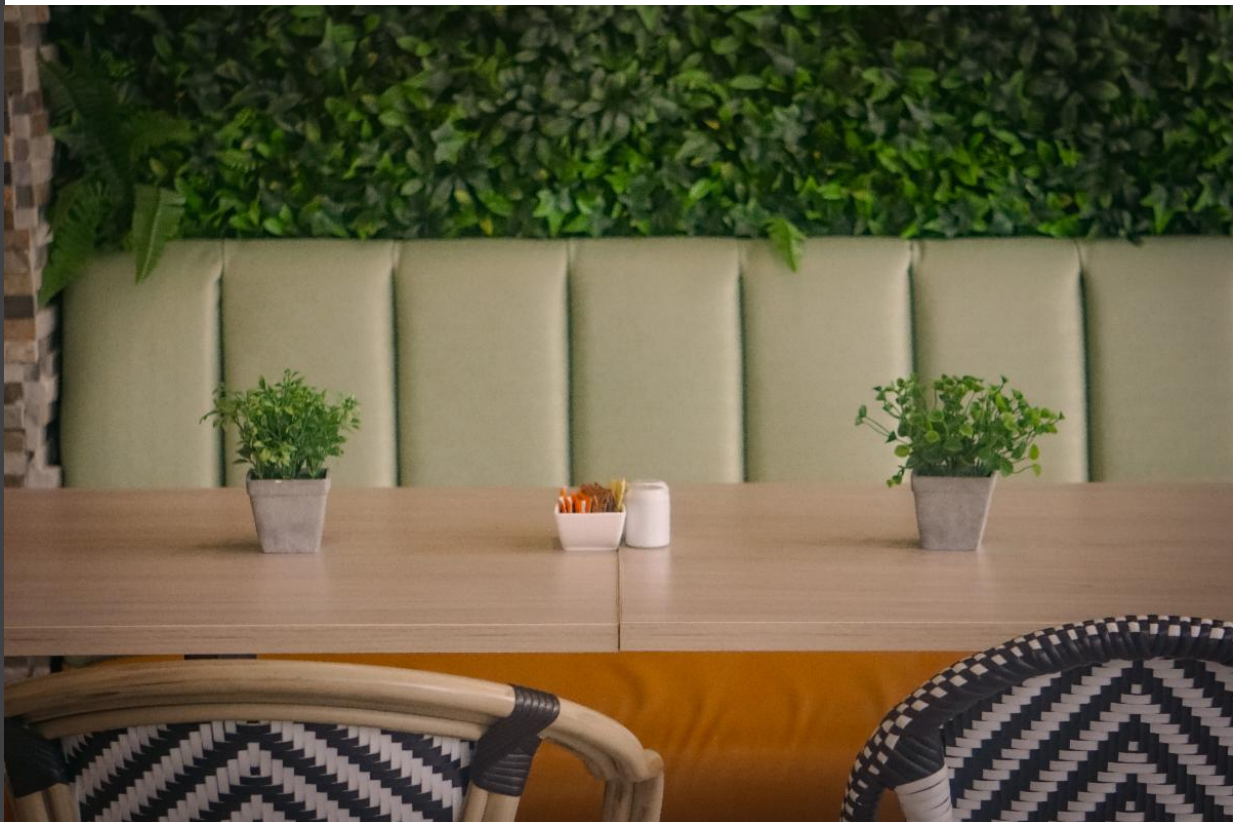
children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab, till they had completed the period of grief and mourning for Moses. Now Joshua, son of Nun, was filled with the spirit of wisdom, since Moses had laid his hands upon him; and so the children of Israel gave him their obedience, thus carrying out the LORD's command to Moses.

DEUTERONOMY 34:1-9

Reflection

This section signals the end of the book of Deuteronomy as the geographic details reflect memories of Moses. It begins with God showing Moses *the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that I would give to their descendants*. This land takes in a huge arc from south to north and back to the starting point. While Moses sees the land of promise, he does not “cross over.” (See Dt 3:23-29 for this part of the story.) The connection of land and descendants roots Moses in the life of the community of Israel now and in the future. His life holds meaning for himself and within his community. This is God’s gift.

It is recorded that Moses died and was buried in the land of Moab (the Gentile homeland of Ruth, grandmother of David). Notably, Moses was physically strong and his 120 years is a metaphorical indication that he was blessed, surrounded by God’s favor.



For Pondering

- Imagine yourself meeting Moses in a coffee shop. What do you and he talk about? What questions does he ask you about your experiences with God?
 - What words of remembrance would you say over Moses' grave?
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For Prayer

*My God,
it has taken me time,
but I'm finally learning
to trust You.
When I called, You answered;
when I cried, You sent relief;
when I was in need,
You came through.
You are there for me
in every instance.
I need only
look, think, and understand,
and I can always find You;
there You are,
always ready to help.*

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