

July 6, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

CREATED BY GOD

By Alicia Rodriguez

An Excerpt from the Book of Sirach

The Lord created human beings from the earth, and makes them return to earth again. A limited number of days he gave them, but granted them authority over everything on earth. He endowed them with strength like his own, and made them in his image.

He put fear of them in all flesh, and gave them dominion over beasts and birds. Discernment, tongues, and eyes, ears, and a mind for thinking he gave them. With knowledge and understanding he filled them; good and evil he showed them.

He put fear of him into their hearts to show them the grandeur of his works, that they might describe the wonders of his deeds and praise his holy name. He set before them knowledge, and allotted to them the law of life. An everlasting covenant he made with them, and his commandments he revealed to them.

His majestic glory their eyes beheld, his glorious voice their ears heard. He said to them, "Avoid all evil"; to each of them he gave precepts about their neighbor. Their ways are ever known to him, they cannot be hidden from his eyes.

SIRACH 17:1-15

Reflection

The book of Sirach (Ben Sira) is my favorite book in the Bible, and as a photographer I have always been drawn to creation. So much so that I traveled to Iceland in the middle of winter to see all the beauty it held.

On that trip I was able to visit many sites. I went to several waterfalls, walked on the black sand beaches, swam in the geothermal pools, and witnessed the Northern Lights. However, the most wonderful thing that I experienced on that trip was getting to meet people from all walks of life.

I remember when my friend and I went to visit the local church, and we were not able to open the door. There was a nun nearby that only spoke French, and somehow, we were able to communicate our struggle and she helped us get the door open. Apparently, the wind was so strong that it was pushing the door closed as we were trying to pull it open.

After that encounter we met the pastor, and he welcomed us to his community. He introduced us to the Filipino community, and they took my friend and me in as members of their family. We broke bread with them and got to know them -- and when it was time to leave, they offered to give us a ride since we had walked there, and the wind was much stronger than before. Having been knocked down by the wind several times throughout the day, we accepted their offer, and they showed us their tricks to driving in the rough Icelandic terrain.

Looking back on that trip, I remember all the people I met and how they each took their time to share where they were from and how they got to Iceland. Most of the people we ran into ended up sharing words of wisdom from their experiences in life, and it made me realize how special we are to God.

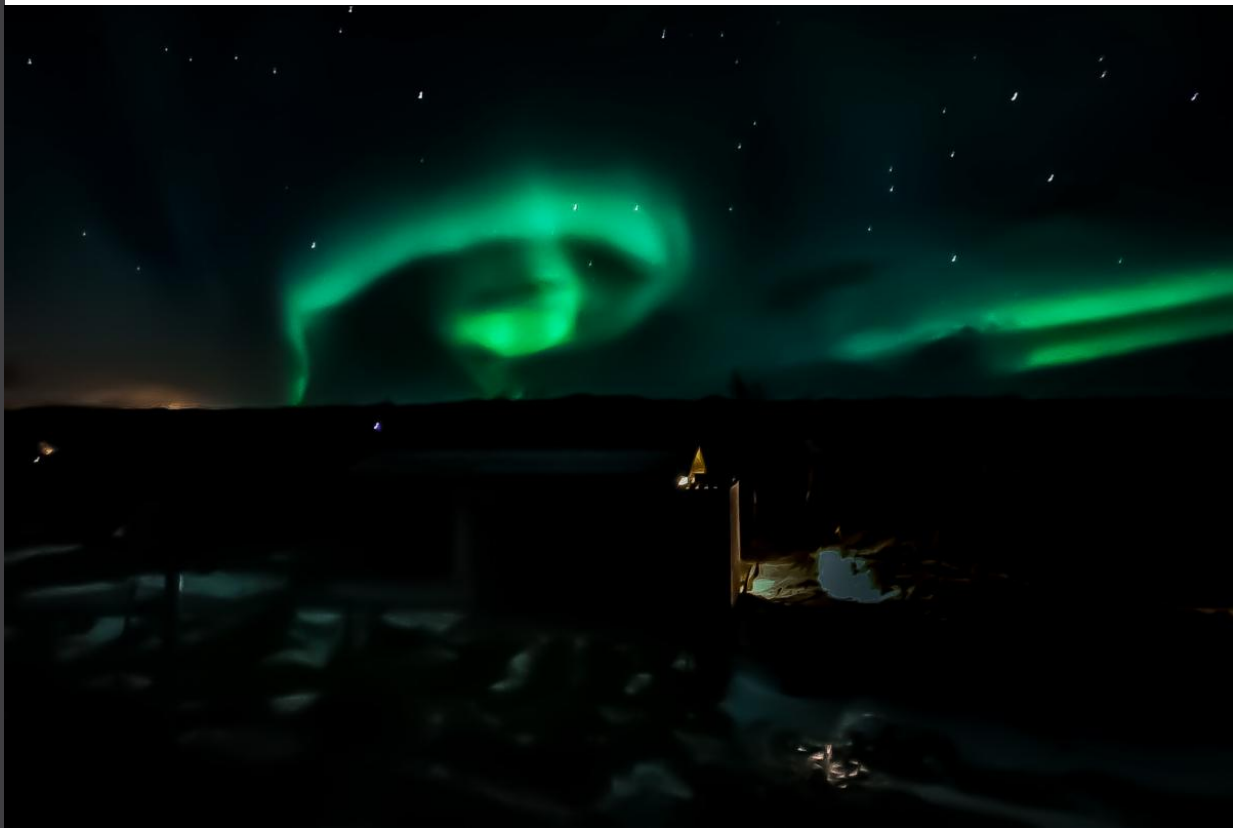
God took His time when He formed us -- and not only did He make us in His image but He "endowed" us with his strength! How amazing is it to know that God has equipped us with His strength!

This chapter in Sirach has always drawn me because it reminds me that I have been equipped with His strength. Knowing that has helped me in trusting in

God as well as being aware of my neighbors and recognizing that they also have been given strength like God's.

Oftentimes it is hard to notice our neighbors. We get so caught up in ourselves that we forget that we are called to be part of a community. We are called to follow God and do God's work. We were carefully and meticulously created by God, from God, and for God.

Another way to look at it, since God is love, is that we were created by love, from love, to love. We should love one another as well as love all the other creations that God has made.



Northern Lights - Thingviller. Iceland
Photo by Alicia M. Rodriguez

For Pondering

- What emotions does this reading stir in you?
 - What does it mean to you to be “endowed with strength like His own, and made in His image”?
 - What are some “wondrous deeds” that you have recently experienced?
-

For Prayer

O My Lord Jesus

*O my Lord Jesus,
low as I am in Your all-holy sight,
I am strong in You, strong through Your Immaculate Mother,
through Your saints
and thus I can do much for the Church, for the world, for all I love.*

ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

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