

Day 16 (October 30, 2020)

by Rev. Katherine Arthaud

Scripture focus

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? (Matthew 6:28-30, NRSV)

Reflection

A couple of weeks ago, I took a day off to drive across the lake to play tennis with some old friends at a lodge in the Adirondacks. It was a sparkingly beautiful day—blue sky, golden leaves, glistening lake, hardly a cloud in the sky. Somewhat uncharacteristically, I arrived at my destination quite early, but when I tried to text my friends to tell them that I was there, I found that there was no service. Not even a little. So I wandered up to a grassy knoll that looked out over the valley, and took in the glorious autumn colors, the craggy mountain face in the distance, and watched as a hawk soared across the sky. It was breathtakingly beautiful. And peaceful. Then I walked back to the empty tennis courts and waited on a bench in the sun. There was not a human being to be seen. At one point a monarch butterfly fluttered by, hovering for a moment near my ankles before taking off to do whatever butterflies do on a sunny fall day. Had I known I was going to be doing any waiting, I would have brought a book or some knitting—and lacking any of those things, would have played around with my phone, checking emails, texts, Facebook, etc., you know the drill. But I had no book, no wool, and zero service. So I just sat there, enjoying the day, enjoying being in my body, basking in the

warm sun, breathing in the mountain air. Eventually my friends showed up and we played three sets of tennis, and then, as the sky began to dim, I headed home. Of course, once back on the other side of the lake, my phone started lighting up with text messages—all the stuff that had been piling up during the time I was out of range—many of which contained some variation of “WHERE ARE YOU?!?!” Two were from my kids. I called them back. As it turned out, they had been worried when they hadn’t heard from me, and also, both had had pretty challenging days. I spoke with them, and then continued on my way. Now, probably a number of you reading this are parents yourselves, and so will understand when I say that, typically, hearing that two of my children were unhappy(ish) would have rattled me, or at least eroded my own sense of well-being to some degree. But on *this* day, I found that after talking to them and hearing their woes, I was just as serene and grateful in my heart as I had been when that orange and black butterfly flitted about the bench where I sat in the afternoon sunlight. I was impermeably happy. Safe, content, and well in my soul.

Prayer

Thank you, God, thank you, for the times we get to bask in your love and the beauty and joy of this dazzling creation. Thank you for the friendships that shore and buoy us up in this life, that fill our hearts with gladness and a sure and solid sense that we are loved and that we belong. Thank you for playfulness and miracles. Thank you for soaring birds, golden leaves, butterflies, sparkling lakes, and trees. Thank you for all the things, great and small, that remind us that there is a God and we are not it. That, like the lilies, we are beautiful and well and cared for, that we lack for nothing. Seriously: thank you. Amen.

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