



Leaning into the Heart of the Holy

2016 Lenten Devotions

Friday

March 4, 2016

Devotional Thought by Spencer Edwards

As retold by Elizabeth Edwards

Several years ago, we started a new family Advent tradition of reading a children's book together each night during the season. We've explored traditional favorites as well as enjoyed new authors, and, as Spencer and Daniel have gotten older, they have enjoyed taking turns reading as much as being read to.

Last Advent, instead of a children's book, we decided to read poetry together each night, and I was excited to introduce the boys to some of my favorite poets: Paul Laurence Dunbar, Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, Mary Oliver, even some Shel Silverstein and Roald Dahl thrown in for fun. One evening, we had chosen a couple of poems by another favorite, Christina Rossetti, whose lyrical poetry is often filled with religious symbolism. Since we often sing her text "In the Bleak Midwinter" as part of our Advent worship, it seemed appropriate to share some of her poems, and though I wasn't sure if the boys would grasp the full meaning, thought it worthwhile simply for the beauty of her words.

We read Rossetti's poem "Up-Hill," and afterward, Spencer asked, unprompted, "Is she talking about heaven?" We had a conversation about what the poem might mean, that perhaps it wasn't limited to our ideas where we go after we die. He thought for a moment and replied, "Yeah, I guess God is where we can stop and rest any time."

Up-Hill

by Christina Rossetti

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Prayer:

Holy God, I come into your presence so aware of my human frailty and yet overwhelmed by your love for me. I thank you that there is no human experience through which I travel where your love cannot reach me. If I climb the highest mountain you are there and yet if I find myself in the darkest valley of my life, you are there. Teach me today, and every day of my journey, to love you more. Help me to rest in your love that asks nothing more than the simple trusting heart of a child.
Amen.

From www.beliefnet.com, Anonymous, adapted

Isaiah 40:28-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.