



Leaning into the Heart of the Holy

2016 Lenten Devotions

Monday

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By Carol Barker

In her article "Listening for God," Linda Douty asks the question "how has God wired you for listening?"¹ My personal wiring requires that whatever it is that I'm supposed to be hearing will have to come to me while I'm multi-tasking...so I thought.

In my adult life there have been three major events in which I begged God to help me "manage" the situation. The last month of my Mother's life was one of those events. During that time period, I went for a run one morning hoping it would help me face whatever that day might hold for me. While running, I found myself having trouble seeing because I had tears flowing down my cheeks. I could not breathe very well because I was on the verge of hyperventilating due to the crying. I was having trouble putting one foot in front of the other as a result of mental & physical exhaustion. As I struggled with my run on this quiet country path a very large flock of Eastern Bluebirds flew from one side of that country path to the other. This flock of 100 plus Bluebirds caused me to stop running. As I watched with awe the Bluebirds, one by one, found their perch in crepe myrtles on the edge of my running path. Then there was silence, no fluttering wings, no chatter between the birds, no rustling leaves. It was at this moment that the quiet whisper of God came to me. It was a message of hope, forgiveness, peace and love. As I held that message close to my heart in the subsequent weeks, I saw and felt evidence of hope for the future without my Mother, forgiveness of myself and others around me, peace for my Mother as she drew her last breath while I held her in my arms, and the incredible love of family and friends.

Joyce Rupp's poem, "Lent 2001" challenges us to "lean a little further into the heart of the Holy," suggesting that we slow down, be quiet, observe, and listen for God. "The still, small voice is speaking-can you hear it?"² I did!

¹Linda Douty, "Listening For God," in *Stepping Stones for Spiritual Growth* at http://www.explorefaith.org/stepstone_listen.html

²Ibid.

Prayer:

God, whose way is our life, in this season of Lent, you turn our heads and point our steps toward the wilderness. Even as the sand burns our feet, we praise you for the gift of the desert: for how else can we fully know the beauty of the river?

–Colleen Toole, Princeton Seminary Class of ‘16

1 John 2:1-6

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. Whoever says, “I have come to know him,” but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says, “I abide in him,” ought to walk just as he walked.