



Leaning Into the Heart of the Holy

2016 Lenten Devotions

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 6, 2016

Leaning In . . .

By Jessica Williams

I had dinner with a friend a while back and he said to me near the end of the meal "you know, it's so nice to be with someone that I want to lean toward." Granted, it was a loud restaurant, but as he said it, I realized we were both so engrossed in our conversation that we were actually leaning into the table, toward one another. His message was simple: he was fully invested in our visit and was engaged, as opposed to merely being present. That image stuck in my mind and I considered it a great compliment.

A few weeks before Lent, I began taking Social Dance lessons (you know, the foxtrot, swing, rumba!) The very first thing my instructor said to me as he took me in his arms was "lean into me, Jessica, so that you can feel my lead." I felt my balance begin to tip as I leaned toward him, but I am learning that if I trust him, leaning forward just enough (while simultaneously remaining aware of his lead hand on my back), I can sense where he wants me to go, and that makes the movement of the dance more seamless and beautiful. Isn't that a spectacular image of what God wants to be to us? Our dance instructor, leading us to dance through our lives, if only we will lean in and trust Him, knowing that he has His hand on our backs in our inevitable times of darkness and chaos?

The very next week, I received the first email regarding the Lenten devotions at Lakeside. "May we all lean a bit closer to Jesus . . . and risking . . . falling into the loving and steadfast arms of the Holy." Just like my friend and me, bending toward our fellowship. Just like my dance instructor asking me to lean in to feel his lead and the music. The quote Dr. Wright used spoke to me. All at once these three images flooded my thoughts: the love of friends, the instruction of good teachers, and the arms of my Loving God. May I be brave enough to lean. To dance. And to fall.

Prayer:

Lead me in the dance of life, O God.
Turn my heart toward you as I follow your lead
into places of wonder and grace.
Attune my ear to the music that hums beneath
the surface of my thoughts and activities.
Give me a lithe spirit that moves with your
flow of love and grace.
May I find joy in the dance that is my life.
With you as my partner and guide, I pray.
Amen.

From www.sadlierreligion.com

Psalm 30

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.
O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.
O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved."
By your favor, O Lord, you had established me as a strong mountain;
you hid your face; I was dismayed.

To you, O Lord, I cried, and to the Lord I made supplication:
"What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?
Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me! O Lord, be my helper!"

You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you for ever.