



Leaning into the Heart of the Holy

2016 Lenten Devotions

Wednesday

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By Andy Barker

"You know, Brother, there are no atheists at sea," the Captain stated as he stuck his head up through the hatch. In his hands were two steaming cups of coffee—the first warmth we had been able to enjoy for the past 36 hours.

I had been standing at my favorite perch onboard a 48-foot sailboat in the middle of the North Atlantic, nearing the end of my navigational watch. Things had finally calmed down after battling a tropical depression which had heaved and tossed us effortlessly for nearly two days. Everything was wet, but secured, with only the slightest triangle at the jib for stability. A storm when it passes seems to vacuum all the clouds and interference from the sky overhead, making the dawning sky vivid with constellations and the slightest hint of cloud formations now in the east would soon be spectacular! It was still dark enough that the bimini top at my chest would shield the small navigational instrument lights below me in the cockpit, allowing me to engulf all that was above and around me. There is no noise, no human pollution, only the waves, wind, and sky that God provides.

I am certain all five of us aboard had been equally fearful during the past many hours. We all had faith in our boat, our equipment, our abilities, but especially our God. I know my prayers were not the only ones uttered onboard. He had brought us through a time in which we were tested—really tested. Now, and in other vibrant mornings and evenings on this adventure, we would receive his creational rewards. Lean into the Heart of the Holy and you will receive blessings.

"This (and every day) is the Day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Psalm 118:24

Prayer:

Dear Lord, be good to me;
The sea is so wide,
And my boat is so small.

—Breton Fisherman's Prayer

Psalm 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers.

You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
At your rebuke they flee;
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys
to the place that you appointed for them.
You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.
By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.
From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth,
and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart.
The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has its home in the fir trees.

The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the coneys.
You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
When the sun rises, they withdraw
and lie down in their dens.
People go out to their work
and to their labor until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.
There go the ships,
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

These all look to you
to give them their food in due season;
when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the Lord.
Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Praise the Lord!