

November 2016

My dear friends,

The past two weeks I have been in Georgia with my family and have been blessed to be able to care for my father, along with my mother, two sisters and brother in the last days of his earthly life. After a long, loving and faith-filled life, my dear father passed into the hands of his loving creator on Nov. 3rd, just one week shy of his 83rd birthday. It has been a time of loss, grief, and sorrow for me and our whole family. It has also been a time of gathering, love and thanksgiving. I give thanks to God for giving me a father that loved, guided and taught me, and whom I will dearly miss. I give thanks for a mother, siblings, wider family and friends that have covered me and all of us with love and care. In our life and in our death, in our joy and in our sorrow we give thanks to God.

A few weeks ago we said Psalm 65 in our service—an ancient song of praise in which we are reminded that the very hills sing with joy and praise of God. That week I went out to Letchworth State Park for the first time. Its beauty astounded me—the leaves changing color, the interplay of light and dark shadow, and the mist and light which created a full arc rainbow over the falls. I could not but help to think of Psalm 65. All of creation was clothed in beauty, wonder and praise of its creator. Everywhere we go we can find evidence of the love with which God created our beautiful earth and how we were created as beloved children of God.

My father always loved the mountains—especially those of NE Georgia. He and our family find peace and consolation in these beautiful hills and Mom and Dad were able to accomplish a life-long dream to move here about 8 years ago. The time that I've spent here, surrounded by the glory of God's vast and beautiful creation, reminds me that everything we do should be set in terms of thanksgiving; everything we do should be a reflection of the love in which we were created. We are called to clothe ourselves—just as the hills are clothed in beauty—in joy, thanksgiving and praise.

Your sister in Christ,
Mother Bonnie+

Psalm 65: 12-14

*You crown the year with your goodness, *
and your paths overflow with plenty.*

*May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, *
and the hills be clothed with joy.*

*May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; *
let them shout for joy and sing.*