

Spiritual Reflection for December 2019

Signs, Symbols and Silence

It is with deep appreciation for the many kind words of encouragement I have received over the past 19 years of writing that I am submitting this last reflection letter. I cannot thank you enough for reading and reflecting with me on the many messages God has sent to be applied to my own life and shared with all of you. An ending and a beginning now await. I leave you with an invitation to personally write each month about a topic the Lord sends you through signs, symbols and silence.

Signs and symbols might come easily, but it will be the silence that brings deeper meaning to those signs and symbols. Take for instance the season of Christmas. As I write, weeks before Christmas, there are signs and symbols all around. Outdoor decorations are going up and stores are filled with tree trimmings and holiday gift promotions. There is snow on the ground and Christmas music is being played. The missing piece in the true meaning of Christmas is not present in the signs and symbols until we take the time to reflect in silence on their application for our life.

To consider the importance of silence let us consider the following. When did the angel appear to Mary announcing her role in the birth of a Savior? In the stillness of the night. When did the angel appear to Joseph to reassure him, he was to take Mary as his wife? In the stillness of night. When was the Savior born? In the stillness of night. When did the shepherds and the wise men receive the message of his birth? In the stillness of night. There is something powerful about the stillness...the silence.

These messages were too important to be watered down by the hustle and bustle of daily life. They required quiet contemplation, quiet integration, quiet appreciation. These messages being sent through signs and symbols (angels, stables, stars) were powerful because they were received in silence.

When I wait patiently in the silence, walk in the silence, or retreat into the silence, God's messages are much stronger. The signs and symbols take on a deeper meaning when they are allowed to speak in the silence. As a recent example, a friend sent me a picture of leaves sticking out of the snow with a question; do I rake or do I shovel? As I looked at the picture and considered her question, I was struck with the application to our daily struggles in decision making. Often times the need is equal and yet one must be chosen over the other.

As you prepare for celebrating the birth of Jesus be aware of the signs-music, snow, cold, invitations, the symbols-nativity scenes, angels, stars, and be willing to reflect on them in the silence of your heart to receive the deeper meaning God is sending directly to you.

I wish you the peace of Christ's love and pray that you will be aware of his love in the messages he sends to you through signs, symbols and silence.

Questions to ponder:

How does God speak to me?

When do I feel closest to God?

What signs tell me about God's love for me?

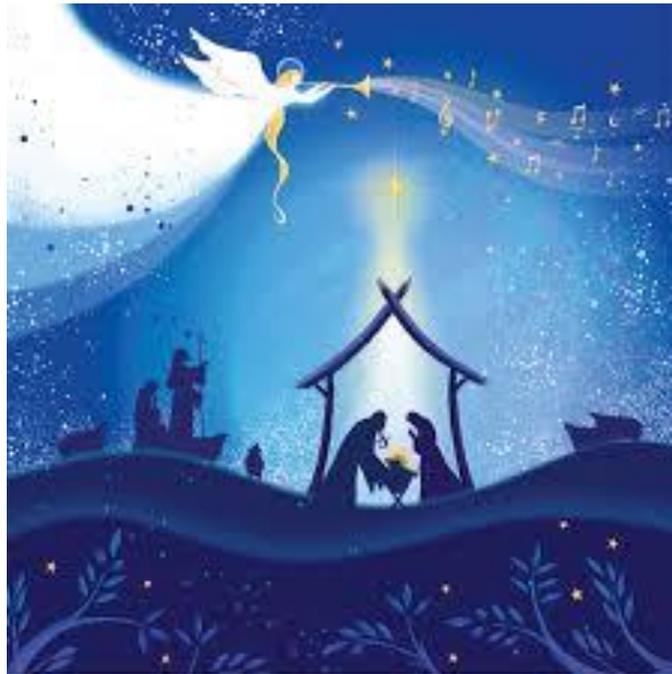
What symbols give me strength?

How can I use silence to deepen my relationship with God?

God Bless You,

Tammy Koenecke, RN, BSN, MASL

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for following my reflections over the years.



Merry Christmas