

By Pat Haggerty

What is a source of inspiration to you? Is it reading the Psalms? Is it a beautiful piece of art? Is it a Sunday homily? Is it nature? It may very well be all of the above. I know that all of these things, on any given day, can provide me with consolation, peace, or opportunities for spiritual growth.

Living in the Northeast, I find that contemplating on the seasons can be prayer. There is nothing like a winter snowfall to cause one to ponder. Depending on the storm---whether it is a light, powdery snowfall or a true Nor'easter---one can always see the hand of God in its mastery. There is nothing to compare to walking in a light snowfall, feeling the flakes gently descend on your face and clinging to your eyelashes. It's as if you are being exquisitely wrapped in God's care.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Announced by all the trumpets of the sky, arrives the snow." The Finnish poet, Tuomas Anhava, tells us that "Snow has made everything earthly clear and quiet. My mind is simple and patient."

We all need to find simplicity and quiet so that we can find God in our everyday lives. We can certainly find God in the wonder of nature; we just need to take advantage of what nature provides us. Right about now, for me, it's the winter snowfall that washes everything clean and makes everything new again. Isn't that what we try to do on a daily basis? Make everything new again! We sometimes stumble and fall; we have set-backs; we have bumps in the road. What is important is that we pick ourselves up and go forward. We find a newness and a

rejuvenation that brings us closer to our God.

Just like a snowfall cleanses our surroundings, it can also cause our hearts to be cleansed. I am reminded of Psalm 51, verses 10-12: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”

Let us each find inspiration in what nature has to offer us. It might not be a snowfall but rather a warm breeze or the rhythm of the ocean’s tides. Whatever it is and wherever you are, keep your eyes opened to the wonders God has created for us. “There is no other door to knowledge than the door Nature opens; and there is no truth except the truths we discover in Nature.” (Luther Burbank)