**Contemplative Service for Wednesday,**

**November 22, 2023**

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*“The First Vision” by J. Kirk Reynolds*

**First reading**: Daniel 2:17

Then Daniel went to his house and made his predicament known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise ones of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed God.Daniel answered and said:

 “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,

to whom belong wisdom and might.

The One who changes times and seasons;

Who removes rulers and sets up rulers;

and gives wisdom to those who seek it

and knowledge to those who desire to understand;

The Holy One reveals deep and hidden things;

For no one else knows what is in the darkness,

and the light dwells with our Holy One.

To you, O God of my inheritance,

I give thanks and praise,

for you have given me wisdom and might,

and now see me through this uncertain moment,

making known to me what we asked of you.”

**Music**: “Amazing Grace” performed by Ariana Stanberry

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW7Ea27ASS8

**Second reading**: a reflection by Alexx Shuman

Trying to move throughout this world with a lil' more intention.

It can be tricky—I'm someone who does well when I'm flying by the seat of my pants, when everything is happening "just in time" and I'm existing in the thrill of not knowing what's next. I can honor this truth... AND acknowledge that part of that tendency stems from a fear of claiming my wants & desires. This is two-fold.

1) Setting a goal implies that you're worthy of receiving all that comes along with achieving that goal. Eughhh. How dare I be so selfish? How dare I be so bold?

And, most present for me these days...2) Better protect myself from any potential feelings of loss & sadness by not even articulating my wants in the first place. Better just be psyched about whatever does end up happening. Right? Right?

When I get stressed, I get vague. Particularly about the things I want from life. How can I receive the exact meal I want if I waltz into a restaurant and say, "Hey, hi, I want food!" Why not order the precise thing I'm hungriest for, and trust that the server will bring me that? As a voracious eater, this restaurant analogy makes the whole thing seem so easy, so obvious, so delicious.

Currently exploring what it's like to shift from anticipatory pain to preemptive gratitude.

Admitting that by attempting to mitigate future pain, I'm also mitigating future joy, and if I am truly trying to live as a whole, embodied human, I need to step fully into my desires. They exist for a reason - to guide us forward, towards growth and potential and thriving and joy. Exploring the idea that we're all OH SH\*T loveable, and OH SH\*T worthy of our desires, and OH SH\*T the universe has our back.

**Music**: “Be Thou My Vision” performed by Ariana Stanberry

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edEv-akNfZ0

**Time of Silent Contemplation**

*You are the Holy One, the only One,*

*and Your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong.
You are great.
You exceed us and so bring us into awe.
You are your energy knows no limit.
You, Mother, Father, nurture heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, God, all Good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good, God, living and true.
You are love. You are wisdom.
You are humility. You are endurance.
You are rest. You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.
You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector.
You are our guardian and defender.
You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord, God beyond time, Compassion without end.*

*—adapted from St. Francis’s prayer of gratitude*

**Communal Blessing**

For this we give thanks: the future which has not been revealed to us, the healing that is yet to come, the compassion that will make your presence known, the determination that will bear forth your justice. We give thanks that we can mirror you in scars that show a body mended, in tears and laughter that invoke your love, in aching muscles and hearts that are stretched to right the world. We thank you for the future which is yours, into which we follow you, Holy One. Amen and amen.

**Music**: “It is Well With My Soul” performed by Ariana Stanberry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEDBHxZqP3E&list=PLAXr1VD_09Ogzy2VUgdtbLkCNSuOZ-gLo>

*Best wishes for a Thanksgiving of comfort and companionship.*