

Tough Mothers

August 29, 2021

YHWH

The Mother of All

Rev. Emma Chattin, Preaching

First Reading ~ *Isaiah 42:14*

For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor,
I will gasp and I will pant.

Second Reading ~ *adapted from May Sarton*

Help us to bring the night into the light,
To lift out the pain, the anger,
Where it can be seen for what it is—
The balance for our wonderful vulnerable, aching love.
Put the wild hunger where it belongs,
Within the act of creation,
Crude power that forges a balance between hate and love.
Help us to be the always hopeful
Gardeners of the spirit
Who know that without darkness,
nothing comes to birth
As without light
Nothing flowers.

Third Reading ~ *adapted from Laura Swan in "The Forgotten Desert Mothers"*

When I was pursuing graduate studies in theology, I found much of my own religious understanding to be deeply challenged. My studies continually called me to reflect upon my own life and my understanding of God as the starting place for doing theology. I had presumed that theology was strictly rational, found in books and rigorous education, and that God was "somewhere out there", waiting to be found. I felt a growing awareness that this might not be the case, and this caused me to question my understanding of life. And God. Transition came upon transition, waves swept over and carried me forward. In this journey I found myself clarifying my values and making choices that carried and moved me inward... and closer to God.

I came to know the desert intimately, and all its painful stripping and intense silence. With time, as I learned to listen deep within, and what had seemed barren was transformed. The deafening silence and absence of God revealed the idols I had held dear. God yearned to strip away all of my false gods so that I might encounter the authentic I AM. My interior journey was toward fertile soil from whence my truest self might emerge. I was hardly prepared for the inner revolution that would result when I began to confront the possibility that my own life and experience had value and meaning.