



SIGNS OF LIFE: *Shelter*

This week we are invited to reflect on the sign of Shelter:

Shelter is an even more timely sign right now as our closed churches might not seem to be the shared places of refuge and celebration they normally are. This week invites us to find shelter in and beyond our physical spaces. Can you use this time to discover that inner place where God dwells, your true self?

What greater feeling of home could there be than knowing that the Source of all your love, and the Source of all your desire, and the Source of all your gifts, and the Source of everything that you're blessed with is in your presence all the time?

Scripture:

One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.
For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock. (*Psalm 27:4-5*)

In Scripture, the idea of home is closely linked with the presence of God and God's protection. The psalms sing of hiding under the shelter of God's wings, God as a crag and stronghold. God is a place of safety. At the same time, being at home with God is more than just safety. In the Gospel of John, Jesus promises, "My father and I will come and make our home with you." When we dwell with God and in God, we find our truest home.

Collect:

Beloved God, who, in your mercy, shelters us with your tender embrace; grant that we may know you as our one true refuge from the world of suffering, and help us to offer compassionate sanctuary to our neighbours in need; even as you dwell within and among us, one holy and undivided Trinity, forever and ever. Amen.

Practice:

1. My most profound experience of being offered refuge and safety by another human being took place in silence. I just can't put into words how precious a gift it was. And all she did was stay with me. Be a safe place for others today. Lend a listening ear.
2. When you are in the place you feel most at home, pay attention to how you settle. Remember that God hides us under the shadow of God's wings; in God we always find shelter.
3. Today, we may feel a kind of detachment: Pray for those – near and far – whose lives are disrupted and who feel isolated by the current crisis.

4. Give yourself permission to step away from today and rest. Remember that God lives within you. Find that place within: the Christ within, the I-in-Christ, that place where God dwells; find your true self.