

Advent Calendar: Day 23

The reflections for this week are centered around the readings for this Sunday's texts
Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:22-40

Luke 2:29-32

²⁹ "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

The Gospel text for this Sunday recalls an event shortly following Jesus' birth when an elderly man by the name of Simeon encounters the Holy family as they bring Jesus to the temple to be dedicated. Simeon, a righteous and devout man, had been promised through the Spirit that he would see "the consolation of Israel." Upon seeing the infant Jesus, Simeon embraces the child and praises God with words of insightful gratitude and peaceful assurance. His eyes have seen the face of salvation in Jesus and he is ready to go to his heavenly home.

Christmas season can be hard for those who have suffered a recent death in the family or whose loved one has passed near the holidays. My own father died less than a week from the writing of this devotion and it can feel like Christmas will be harder to celebrate due to this tragedy. However, as I remember Simeon, the Christmas story begins to diminish my grief more than my grief could ever diminish Christmas. Upon seeing again the infant Jesus I am consoled in God's realized promises and salvation's joy. We can all rest in peace because our loved ones now rest in Him.

Don't avoid your memories of loved ones that are no longer with you during this year's holiday celebrations. Give thanks to God for their witness in your life and celebrate the memories of Christmas' past that they inspire. Be comforted that they knew and celebrated the birth of Jesus and now know peace and salvation through Him as does Simeon, as does my father, and as do you.