



## Home is Where We Blossom

by Rev. Dr. Robin Hawley Gorsline

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I am appreciating all the Advent devotionals, as well as the Sunday messages about home, and I have been thinking about history of my homes. I use the plural because I realize my home is not limited to one.

Jonathan and I recently watched a film on Netflix, *Farha*, about the ordeal of a young girl and her village during the *Nakba* (an Arab word for “catastrophe”) when Israel caused hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes in the one place they knew, the place they called home. This bleak, but well done, film got me thinking about home as geopolitical community, the place where we choose to live beside others who make the same choice.



Everyone in the film fled their village except the young girl whose father locked her in the house. The village buildings remain standing but no one lives there. Eventually, she breaks out and sees everyone gone, and starts walking. Eventually she gets to Syria, where she tells her story and hopefully creates a new home.

That put my own privilege in perspective. In my 76 years, I have lived in eight different communities (and if you count Manhattan and Brooklyn separately, it is nine). All by my choice. No one ever forced me out of or into any of them.

The latest, and I hope last, move is to West Orange, NJ for my health and to be close to our daughter. My childhood home in Michigan remains very dear to me, as do Richmond, Greenbelt, and increasingly our new home. Each of these, and even the others, are integral to my spiritual journey.

The Spirit called me to, and guided me in, each one. Thus, home for me is all of them, a combination of memories and ongoing experiences which help me feel at home in each one.

Of course, life was not always easy—what home, what family, does not include conflict, anxiety, and even anger at times? But I was always blessed to have not only a roof over my head and my loved ones but also a community where I could be me.

Moreover, I felt and feel God in each place, realizing each one was, and is, sanctuary where I could receive divine gifts intended for me to be the whole person I am called to be. Thus, I am reminded again of the verse I quoted for the devotional on November 28.

*“Then a shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse, from Jesse’s roots, a branch will blossom.” ~Isaiah 11:1 The Inclusive Bible*

Home for me is like the stump of Jesse, from whom my branch blossoms.

God, guide us in the way of peace, so that no more people are forced from their homes, interrupting or even ending their blossoming. Amen. Asé. May it be so.

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Advent Scripture Reference Lectionary  
[1 Samuel 2:1-10](#); [Genesis 17:15-22](#); [Galatians 4:8-20](#)

Advent Hymn Reflection  
“[What Child is This,](#)” performed by Andrea Bocelli



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