

Advent Devotional

by Rev. Dr. Robin Hawley Gorsline

Blessed by the Night Sky

Earlier this week, Cathy Batson beautifully and powerfully shared her relationship with stars, linking her feelings to the journey of her ancestors as they worked their way north to freedom. Like the Magi, they navigated following a star.

This got me to thinking about the relationship between stars and the night sky. One of the losses of increasing urbanization and industrialization is the loss of dark skies. Growing up in a rural setting in southeast Michigan, I can still remember when I was about twelve, Ford Motor opened a giant plant to build Lincoln Continentals just three miles away. As the construction advanced and then the multi-acre plant opened there was a new glow in the sky that erased most of the stars I used to enjoy seeing— feeling blessed by the twinkling angels above. After that, not so much.

Most of my adult life has been spent in metropolitan areas where few stars are visible at night—many call this light pollution. I really miss the soaring beauty of a night sky sprinkled with stars everywhere I look.

Frankly, I miss the deep dark of the night sky just as much as I miss the stars. There is great beauty in utter darkness. Unfortunately, many of us have been conditioned to see the dark as dangerous, even evil.



And yet, according to Genesis, dark existed before light. And think of how often God approaches chosen ones in the dark (Jacob wrestling with the angel, e.g.). Carl Jung, the Swiss psychoanalyst who founded analytical

psychology, has said, “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.”

I think of Advent wreathes with candles which many have in our homes. Yes, they are beautiful in a fully lighted room, but how powerful they are with all the other lights off.

So as we continue our journey of following the star let us also give thanks to the dark for keeping the star in front of us, for reminding us that life, and I believe God, is both light and dark.