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ROUSE YOURSELF, ROUSE YOURSELF (Is 51:17)

Many of us can remember an experience that drew us to God in a way that seemed to wake us up. We were in a slumber state as far as spiritual consciousness was concerned. Our eyes were not so much closed as caught up in our day-to-day concerns. Then the wake-up call came. Not something we had expected perhaps. So it was like a jolt out of the blue. Or it came quietly, gradually making an impact. We found ourselves led into a special place of meeting God Who, of course, had been waiting for us all along. “Awake, O my soul. Awake. I will wake the dawn” (Ps 108:3). Yes, a new dawn rises within us, its rays illuminating details we had not attended to before. We see all that is around us now with an enlightened gaze.

These special times of waking up are exceedingly precious and deserve our close attention. We want to retain their particular power. Keeping an account of what took place, how the awakening occurred—a sacramental encounter, the celebration of a feast, a sermon, a retreat, a book, the sight of beauty in a child’s face—could be written down in a page of journaling. The poets among us might compose some lines to capture the riches of the awakening. Or we might just let it settle among our most valuable remembrances, like a shining jewel we take out to look at from time to time.

There are a million ways God pursues us down the broad avenues and detours of our life, saying, “Please pay attention to Me. Really look at Me. I love you more than anybody else does.” We are being asked to respond to a gesture of affection, to One Who says to us, “Let’s walk together down this path, you and I. Every mile I’m with you.” We feel a divine arm thrust gently across our shoulders that gives strength and assurance as we move ahead.

I answer, “Show me the way in which I should walk... Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. May Your good Spirit guide me on level ground”(Ps 143: 8, 10).

God awaits everyone of us. You don’t have to make an appointment for some special time. You’re not on a telephone line to Heaven. “Press One. Press Two. Your call is important to us.” Indeed, your call to God is supremely important—to God and to you. The line is always available. Every moment is open for your communication. All times are times for connecting with God. “I call upon You for You will answer me, O God. Incline Your ear to me. Hear my words” (Ps 17:6).

We readily turn to Jesus, Who is our Savior, when we need help as some disaster threatens. And in our fast-paced world, that can happen all too often. Our Maine highways and back roads have far more traffic as the cool beautiful havens our state provides, beckon summer and autumn visitors. It is a privilege to share now what we

have all year long. (Well, yes, in other seasons we bear the burden of snow and ice, beautiful though they can be.)

People on the move may pace their journey at dangerous speeds. The possibility of peril speaks to us of how vulnerable we are. When we see vehicles racing ahead, prayer comes readily to our lips. "Jesus, help them. Jesus, help me." Our mood becomes sober and the need for divine assistance occupies our thoughts. "When I called, You answered me. You built up strength within me" (Ps 138:3).

All the ongoing happenings that make up our human lives are not just unconnected occurrences. God is always involved in every aspect of them. I read the words of the Psalmist and see how they apply to me. "Your eyes have seen my actions. In Your book they are all written. My days were limited before one of them existed" (Ps 139:16).

The Holy Spirit opens my understanding to a realization that I am precious to my God, to my Redeemer Jesus Christ. "How weighty are Your designs!" (17). We do feel that weight as applied to our own fragile being. We sometimes say to God, "What You're requiring is too much. Why this burden handed to me?" Maybe we don't hear a clear answer in this world. Our ears are not that well attuned to the message, or the message itself is too demanding. God asks us only to believe that divine mercy will recompense every loss. "I give thanks to Your name for Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness. You have made great above all things Your name and Your promise" (Ps 138:2). And the promise we have is in Jesus who says, "Know that I am with you always" (Mt 28:20). Wherever the road leads, up down, and sideways, I never pass over it alone.

Sister Margaret Dorgan, DCM