
Your Paths Overflow with Plenty

**An article for *The Cathedral Times*
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*You crown the year with your goodness, *
and your paths overflow with plenty.*
—Psalm 65:12

Last week, I got to spend a day at the beach, which means that I came home with all kinds of treasures! Because that's what I do at the beach: knowing that the paths along the ocean "overflow with plenty," as Psalm 65 says, I walk slowly, paying attention to what lies beneath my foot with each step. On this particular walk, what lay around my footsteps was mostly beautiful oyster shells. They are beautiful to me, at least. I certainly have my type, as you would know if you saw my collection, though I couldn't tell you what it is. Maybe it's the designs etched on them, or the stories told in them. Sometimes, it's the way a shell feels: scratchy, or silky smooth and cool. Or the color! The color really shows when the shells are wet, too: russet orange, deep blue, purple, shiny gold or silver. Once my hands are full, I tell myself that I can't pick up another shell. But then, another one catches my eye and begs to be turned over, examined, touched. This path really does overflow with plenty, and so do my hands.

When I came back to Atlanta and went on my usual walk, around the usual route, which I've done countless times over the last 20-plus years, I found myself walking with the same attention. With the same wonder and delight that I had at the beach, I studied the holy ground beneath my feet, looking for the riches that it, too, offered up to the world. And sure enough, even that most ordinary, routine of paths overflowed with plenty! Thick, sturdy pieces of bark, and thin pieces covered in lichen lace. Papery tubes that had been the skin of a cypress tree. Rich tangles of moss. A stick curved into a perfect curlicue. Blue jay feathers, and one small, black feather with white polka dots. As at the beach, my hands were so over-filled with treasures that I was dropping things on my way home, which drew my eye to the ground yet again and, lo and behold, there was more goodness!

Friends, there is goodness all around. There is beauty all around. There are marvelous signs of God's abundance and provision and blessing all around. You don't have to go far to find them, either. You don't even have to be outside! Come, walk around the Cathedral of St. Philip, and pay attention as you do. Like the beach, and like the path in my neighborhood, it is a holy place. Every nook and cranny of it has been designed and tended to with love and attention. Still, after nine years of working here, it takes my breath away to walk into the nave. Even more so, now that I have heard so many of the stories and prayer and come to know so many of the saints, past and present—the people of this church—who have made it holy.

When we pay attention to the goodness and beauty and abundance around us, whether inside or outside, or in nature or people, we are moved to thanksgiving and praise. We also are moved to love. In fact, this simple practice of paying attention is also a practice in gratitude and love. Yes, it *is* a practice. When we pay attention and look for beauty in the obvious places, like the beach and church, we are training to do so in the harder places (and with the harder people, too!).

We are also training ourselves in a powerful antidote to anxiety. When your mind starts racing ahead of you, or when worry keeps you up at night, remember the ground beneath you. Remember God, the ground of all being. Slow down, breathe, pay attention, and give thanks. Where do you see good, beauty, abundance, blessing? How is God present, right here and now? For what do you give thanks, in this moment?
