

Window Gazing on Travel - A Spiritual Delight **By Florina Joseph, SCN**

*"I sat by the window gazing
Waiting for grace to bestow
The numerous forms of knowing
The mysteries God shows"*

Imagine, you are traveling window seat on a journey, with music in your ears accompanied by a pleasant weather ... wouldn't it be amazing! While for some people, Window Gazing might be a leisurely act, for me, it's a spiritual new terrain where one can learn to connect with the unknown, other than connecting to oneself, discover a profound sense of peace, joy, and appreciation, especially when on a journey. 'Window Gazing on Travel' emerged as a free form of prayer for me ever since I was introduced to contemplative Spirituality within the SCN Congregation.

I often wonder, why it is one of my favorites among the many forms of prayer! I guess, maybe because I discover God's presence in the far limits of my vision, or maybe it enkindles the missionary zeal to 'be out there' among God's people, or maybe it gives flesh to passive dreams and desires within me seeking to venture out into the unknown, or maybe just to realize that I'm part of a bigger world.

I recall those long train journeys I had with my family during our summer vacations, my sisters and I always tussled for the window seat as if it was the most treasured part of the journey, in that case, any vehicle would have to narrate the same story of our journeys.

To say...

There is something mystical about Window Gazing on a journey.

... running trees and moving vehicles, small tents standing between tall buildings, the wavering colors of the garments of people and the smell of flavors from the roadside restaurants, busy streets and green fields, the beauty of daylight and the romance of twilight, the lanterns of the village and the treat of city lights ... although so poetic, the view never stops.

As I keep watching, a child-like amusement comes alive. There is a wonder of the constant newness that keeps exciting and if accompanied by music the experience is beyond words. Emerging out of my little world, within four walls, to a whole new

world where I feel a connectedness and become that which I see ... I'm that little girl who dances her way back home. I'm that old man who smokes out his worries into the open. I'm that small rat who rushes through the rails of the track. I'm that construction worker who carries loads of cement on his back. I'm that beggar lying on the road making the traveler feel ashamed of their riches. I'm that flower waiting to be noticed among her companions. I'm that scarecrow who wants to dance on the fields. I'm that father who bids his daughter a teary goodbye. I'm the drunkard on the street who cries her heart out. I'm that person who just met with an accident and lost his life. I'm a company to his grieving family consoling them. I'm the aesthetic Sun which is setting. I'm that infinity of clouds that I believed to be heaven at a young age. I'm that bird who enjoys the freedom of my spirit. I'm ... and I keep becoming all, within a flash of seconds, just through my window seat.

*I threw my heart out at all the places I saw,
Some are poetic, the mystic fields lying near mountains,
While some, plaintive like a simple small-town market,
In them, my heart reached out unbiased... (By Parivallal Swamy)*

As I travel through the many shoes I wear by way of my eyes and heart. I am intervened by feelings, thoughts, questions, inspirations, disturbances and of course flashbacks. Slowly, the gap between the reality around and the reality within me bridges up. Sometimes the restlessness of the unpleasant grows, yet, the comfort and reassurance of the gentle breeze that caresses my face, makes me flee from the narrowness of my circumstances to engage myself in becoming part of the larger terrene as I face the real world through my senses. It is chaos accompanied by silence - a mixture of my favorite kind, to a state of fewer borders and wider possibilities. And then I wonder ... Who other than God could be responsible for this transformation?

"Spirit, lead me where my trust is without borders, wherever you would call me"

I see faces different than mine contemplating their own contemplations undisturbed, in my company of strangers. Scenes that appear out of the blue on the bus, train, flight, or street are just very similar to incidents in our lives. I feel all you have to do is, just sit, embrace the moment and it's all yours. This privilege that Jesus didn't have, which he might envy (just kidding) ... is a prayer of my free spirit. My mom once said, "It is good to have the company of the rosary during travels." Ever since then, the beads of the Rosary have been my starters for the travel and it adds to the experience with my spiritual neighbours.

The blessing of Window Gazing is that the traveler always has a fresh and unique experience on a daily basis. It is not much about the destination it is more about the journey. How much meaning one finds in it and how one allows the experience to penetrate one's being. A window seat may not always be your luck but the journey will mostly be a divine experience.

*All these places that caught my attention,
Every single one of them has become my home,
All these people who live their simple life,
Have become my neighbours, in my spirit....*

*Whether these places are as gifted as I perceive,
And my spiritual neighbours enjoy their routine?
I simply cannot answer for them, I'm just a window gazer,
As long as I'm on travel, I recognize the world I see as I want it to be, a perfect
place ... (By Parivallal Swamy)*

Questions for Reflection:

1. Can I recall a scene that still remains in my heart while I was Window Gazing?
What does it speak to me of?
2. Have I encountered situations of chaos accompanied by an inner silence?



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