**In the Fog of Ordinary Time**

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By Lucia A. Silecchia

I love a foggy morning.

Perhaps this is a luxury I can enjoy because I am not a pilot, a seafarer or a driver on winding country roads. For those such as these, the inability to see in the distance is not a welcome treat.

But, when I wake up in the morning, look out my seventh story window and see a milky dew fill the air, it brings a special peace. This peace lasts even when I leave home if the streets and sidewalks are still shrouded with early morning mist.

I think my fondness for fog comes in the way it hides all that lies in the distance and forces me to pay attention, willingly or not, only to those things that are close at hand.

Perhaps I appreciate this because, sometimes there is a wisdom to living life inspired by foggy mornings.

Typically, when someone describes feeling “in a fog” this is meant in the pejorative, as something to be avoided. Yet, there is also a beauty in taking time to gaze only on that which is nearby. So often, it is tempting to spend the day looking into the distance and into the future, rather than focusing on that which is up front and close by.

How often do we listen to someone across the table from us, while thinking about the texts we want to answer? How often do we hear someone speaking while we are busily planning ahead for how we will respond? How often do we greet small children by asking them what they want to be when they grow up rather than enjoying who they are? How often do we watch a play or listen to a concert while our minds wander to what the workday will hold the following morning?

How often do we gaze at the mountain in the distance without seeing the wildflowers that bloom next to us at the side of the road? How often do we pray for the “big” things in life, without seeking God’s sustenance in the daily bread of everyday life? How often do we spend our attention on the important things we plan to do someday, without noticing the little things we can do today? How often is it easier to appreciate the sights we seek a world away than it is to appreciate the highlights of our own hometowns?

I admire those who live with the grace to see the needs of the person before them, know the need to walk with God in the present moment, and do not fail to miss the opportunity to stretch out a hand to help today, not tomorrow.

When a fog rolls in, we have no choice but to live with the distance hidden for a time. Willingly or not, the beautiful and the frightening, the pleasant and the disturbing things that lie beyond are hidden. When those things lie beyond our line of sight, there is nothing to do except to focus on that which is nearby.

Yes, life cannot be lived entirely this way. Planning and keeping an eye to the future have their place and are important parts of responsible adulthood.

Nevertheless, I would still like to live with a lesson from a foggy morning. Sometimes, it is just as important to surrender the future and the far away. Sometimes, it is a gift to gaze only at the blessings and burdens close at hand. Sometimes, it is worth letting the fog roll in to our ordinary time.

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