

Christmas Thoughts - From Anna Von Reitz



By Anna Von Reitz

I came downstairs this morning to survey the wreck of my house. Months of ceaseless work and frequent travels have taken their toll: dust everywhere (even some cobwebs!), tall stacks of paperwork waiting for correspondence and filing, more stacks of mail and dispatches, 53 phone calls to return, 53,000 emails but-who-is-counting, and somewhere, somehow, I am supposed to have a life, keep my housekeeping in order, be present for my family and my community, pay the bills, and last but not least, create a Christmas out of this chaos.....

Slumping down on the last chair in the house that was not piled high with packages or mail or abandoned winter coats and sipping my coffee gratefully, my eyes fell on two small books, almost booklets, isolated and alone on the one bare expanse of gleaming table top left: The New Testament and The Constitution for the united States of America.

They seemed so small, so tiny laying there in a pool of winter sunshine.

Yet, a century and a half ago, these were the foundations of every American's education. The most slovenly wretch in the most impoverished circumstance had access to these two slim volumes, and in them, he had the essence of all education needed to live a good and self-respecting life.

You can do without advanced algebra in most professions, and without calculus, too. You can circumscribe the globe from a Biblical atlas. And with the actual Constitution, you can overthrow any throne. Is this not power enough for any man?

By knowing the social obligations and having a code of ethics to rely on, a man and his country can flourish in peace--- and both of these small books provide that certainty and code. They tell us who we are and who we are called to be. They set forth the parameters of life and decency, of self-respect and respect for others.

If we had no other education now, I had to stop---- if we learned no other useful thing in all our days in school, would we not be better off than we are now, when we are lost and groping for any common understanding?

My home in Alaska is built like a Viking Hall, with one large room, and other rooms branching off it, here a pantry, there a bathroom, there a stairway going to the second story, or down to the basement.... or out to the Arctic Entry that buffers the indoors from the cold.

The adornments are simple and useful in the Nordic way, faintly tinged with things Norwegian and Swedish and German. Old silver spoons. Hand-carved chairs made of oak and maple. Oil paintings of snow-capped mountains. Tall bookcases filled with books. A central fire in a well-worn stove with an open glass front where the flames are visible, and the dogs and cat love to loll away their winter nights content to know that the family is here and all together.

Always, though I didn't plan it that way, there is a faint smell of cinnamon and apples and coffee in the kitchen, and a smell of lavender or roses or balsam fir depending on the season of the year wafting around the rest of the household. It is, I think, even in its state of disrepair and chaos, a blessed and peaceful place, where the stress of modern life has been held at bay.

My husband calls it my "magic bubble", as if I waved my hand and created my own world.

This time of year, there are bouquets of greenery and fresh flowers and tall white candles and outside, there is snow and white birches and tall dark spruce trees as far as the eye can see into the woods. This afternoon as we got started on the clearing and cleaning rituals, I saw a yearling moose, soft dark brown, his velvet muzzle raised up scenting us and no doubt wondering about the brightly lit windows.

Scrub-a-dub-dub, I plodded merrily along, and the old vacuum cleaner roared to life and the broom and the dust mop and a roll of paper towels began to work their own magic.

The paper tide was turned and recouped in the office, and my precious little things of Christmas Past, a tiny framed picture of an angel, a crystal star wandering toward Bethlehem and scattering a thousand tiny rainbows in its wake, a mysteriously luminous ivory statue of Mary and her baby, all came forth from their tissue paper and boxes and settled once more in their places like old familiar dinner guests.

And the Spirit of the Season, gainsay it as some people will, came into the old neglected house with its plain-spoken ways, and transformed it into something magical. Though there is winter all around, dark and snowy and deep, in this house there is warmth and beauty and spring.

I smiled at the two pairs of boots standing side by side on the doormat. Father and son. Just as it always was and is and should be. I smiled at the two dogs settled at the feet of their respective men, and at the cat, curled up in a large, warm, fluffy ball waiting for me to put the pie in the oven and come join her in front of the fire.

It has been a hard year for many of us, and yet, simple as this is, old-fashioned as this is, it's Christmas after all.

Please join me in being grateful for all the blessings we have, for what we have been able to give, for all that we have been able to learn this past year, for the fellowship of those who travel with us on this road, for the rich heritage that belongs to each of us, for the joy of being present right now.

Say a prayer of gratitude and then, a prayer for all our brothers and sisters who have suffered foreclosure and prison and injuries of all sorts as a result of a government gone mad, and then, give thanks again for the changes we have seen and the efforts being made to make America great again.

May all our efforts prosper and come to fruition in the New Year. Let the Thousand Years of Peace begin. May the blessings we are heir to rest upon us. May the joy taking root in our hearts last forever.

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