

Our Winter Seasons

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

**5pm Pacific / 6pm Mountain / 7pm
Central / 8pm Eastern**

Chapter Representatives' Corner
Led by the Rev. Dr. Dianthia Y. Gilmore



The Rev. Dr. Dianthia Y. Gilmore

Texts: Ecclesiastes 3:1, Psalm 34:1, 17-19, and James 1:2-4 NIV

Winter Seasons: I love the works of classic writers and mystics. One of my favorite writers is St. Teresa of Avila (*The Interior Castle*). It is a must-read of our spiritual journey through excellent and colorful analogies and soliloquies. *Dark Night* is a poem by the 16th-century mystic St. John of the Cross. Since then, that theme has expanded into multiple books by various authors describing the popular *Dark Night of the Soul* concept. The modern authors also elaborate on the positive spiritual development of our soul gained through adversity.

The classic writers were down-to-earth about their feelings and their spiritual dry places. However, we often sit in our celestial pulpits in pain, afraid to seek help because of the stigma attached to such. So, we wallow alone in despair and pray for the means of escape, whether on this side of glory or beyond. What if God, like with Job, is allowing the winter seasons of our lives to grow us? If we agree, why do we struggle so much and pray for a release from our temporary dark existence versus resting there?

My Five-Year Winter Season: Dr. Gilmore and I recently moved to a beautiful, gated community after forty-four years in an old inner-city home and community that I loved. However, the 86-year-old home was not healthy for me. It kept me ill, especially during the winter season. In the winter of 2019, I lived in the emergency room. By the end of February 2020, I was in the hospital, and it was suggested I get my final things in order—I had



contracted Covid and had four major underlying conditions. Millions of people were dying with even one of these core conditions. I was not expected to live. I found that announcement a relief, for I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. However, God had more plans for my life. It would take four and half years to regain my strength and move to a new home. My husband faithfully did everything for me for years until I was stronger. I have always been independent, so losing my independence and being isolated in my home and away from large crowds for years would spiral me into a dark place. However, God knows how much we can bear and will make a way to escape. In that dark place of existence, I learned to trust God more, who showed up in my multiple winter seasons in a powerful way. And it was more than I could imagine. Through the coalescing work of the Holy Spirit, my walk in Christ shifted more significantly from a head knowledge of God to a sound-hearted relationship.

New Season—Spring: Today, I enjoy my environmentally safe and spacious new home. It is quiet here. It affords a greater inward journey for daily reflection. The floor-to-ceiling windows bring abundant sunlight, waking me each morning to another God-provided day. Winter 2019/2020 seems so far away. Tall sturdy pine trees line the length of my home and daily remind me of God's presence. In the pre-winter months of November, the pine trees sway in strong winds like a dance. Under heavy snow, the pine trees bear their burden with extended arms of praise, as if they know that spring will yield greater stability, strength, and growth. What about you? Are you swaying with uplifted arms to our Creator God and trusting Him to see you into the next season?

The main lesson learned in the winter season: In the last five years, I have learned that our God is a God of all seasons, especially the winter seasons of our lives. Therefore, in your winter season, when you are overwhelmed with sickness, distress, confusion (brain fog), and your body filled with pain, continue to extend your arms in praise as the sturdy pine trees. Then, our God will surely bring you, as He has done for me, towards our expected end, for His plans for us are so good (Jeremiah 29:11-14). Keep swaying, praying, and praising under the load.

Resource: *The Dark Night of the Soul: A Psychiatrist Explores the Connection Between Darkness and Spiritual Growth* (Gerald G. May, M.D.)

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