#### Isaiah 43:16-21

Thus says the LORD,
who opens a way in the sea
and a path in the mighty waters,
who leads out chariots and horsemen,
a powerful army,
till they lie prostrate together, never to rise,
snuffed out and quenched like a wick.
Remember not the events of the past,
the things of long ago consider not;
see, I am doing something new!
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
In the desert I make a way,
in the wasteland, rivers.
Wild beasts honor me,
jackals and ostriches,
for I put water in the desert
and rivers in the wasteland
for my chosen people to drink,
the people whom I formed for myself,
that they might announce my praise.

#### Psalm 126:1-6

 When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,
we were like men dreaming.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with rejoicing.
 Then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad indeed.
 Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the torrents in the southern desert.
Those that sow in tears
shall reap rejoicing.
 Although they go forth weeping,
carrying the seed to be sown,
They shall come back rejoicing,
carrying their sheaves.

**Philippians 3:8-14**

Brothers and sisters:
I consider everything as a loss
because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.
For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things
and I consider them so much rubbish,
that I may gain Christ and be found in him,
not having any righteousness of my own based on the law
but that which comes through faith in Christ,
the righteousness from God,
depending on faith to know him and the power of his resurrection
and the sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death,
if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

It is not that I have already taken hold of it
or have already attained perfect maturity,
but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it,
since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus.
Brothers and sisters, I for my part
do not consider myself to have taken possession.
Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind
but straining forward to what lies ahead,
I continue my pursuit toward the goal,
the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus.

**John 8:1-11**

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him.

Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She replied, “No one, sir.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.”

The law of growth is rest. We must be content in winter to wait patiently through the long bleak season in which we experience nothing whatever of the sweetness or realization of the Divine Presence, believing the truth, that these seasons which seem to be the most empty are the most pregnant with life.

It is in them that the Christ-life is growing in us, laying hold of our soil with strong roots that thrust deeper and deeper, drawing down the blessed rain of mercy and the sun of Eternal Love through our darkness and heaviness and hardness, to irrigate and warm these roots.

The soil must not be disturbed. Above all we must not disturb it ourselves by our own egoism. We must not turn it over and dig it up by anxieties and scruples. We must not shift it by fretting for a sense of personal perfection: to feel sinless that we may feel free from the pain of guilt and anxiety; to feel pure for the sake of vanity; to be reassured of the hidden presence of Christ in us by experiencing sensible consolation.

The seed must rest in the earth. We must allow the Christ-life to grow in us in rest. Our whole being must fold upon Christ's rest in us, as the earth folds upon the seed.

Source: *The Passion of the Infant Christ;* Caryll Houselander