

March 27, 2021

Saturday

My Sanctuary – My Place of Refuge and Safety
By Sue Arceo

Psalm 139:7-12 Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," ¹² even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For many years my idea and definition of sanctuary has been a huge, beautiful room in my church. This is where I go to sing, listen and pray, along with many people whom I have grown to know as my church family and look forward to worship with each week.

For nearly a year now my sanctuary has become the (most of the time cluttered with daily life) family room in a place I have called home for more than 20 years along with my husband of 28+ years. The clutter now includes the invasion of a work computer, iPad and papers and files needed for working at home for those duties that don't have to be done in the office as the office has become a place where I can no longer interact with people unless I am wearing a mask, maintain a 6' distance and constantly clean up any office items I may need to touch or have touched.

Come Sunday morning just before 10am (and sometimes on Wednesday evenings), I sit down in my rocking chair in front of the flat screen TV and ready myself to dream I am in my church sanctuary to drink up the music, message and meditative/contemplative moments of refuge from what has often been another stressful week in a year that has been an extremely difficult year to experience. Not difficult in the sense that I have had to stay home a lot more than usual. I do go out to work a minimum of hours in the office and make trips to the grocery store, pharmacy and pet

store all while masked and sometimes gloved and attempting to maintain a 6' distance. Staying home has always been comforting to me as I realize my home is also a sanctuary for me – my place of refuge and safety.

I am thankful I am able to do some work from home. Many people do not have that option. We have a treadmill and some exercise equipment to use to try to stay fit so we don't need to go out to a gym. We have the technology to watch movies and shows. Cooking shows are my favorite and have helped me add to my somewhat limited repertoire of recipes so we don't miss those dinners out on a Friday night so much. Travel shows are next on the list of favorites for that escape to another land where life was once "normal." I can even use my smart phone to google a bible verse or prayer if I am in need. I also do crafts at home which consist of making prayer beads and crocheting small, usually holiday projects or an occasional blanket. Counting and stringing beads and wondering what prayers might be said while holding them, and counting crochet stitches, keeps my mind off of the worry of messy politics, Corona virus and other depressing news stories that seem to be the constant these days.

I am thankful my church has the equipment, technology and the people to make worship happen for me and anyone else to tune in and take a break from the worries of the world. I can listen to Pastor Amy give an inspiring sermon and Bryan and many other talented church members provide music and songs to provide and prepare me with what I need to face another week.

Pastor Amy, Bryan, and the technical crew that makes worship happen, I am eternally grateful and I want you to know I am out there listening. I know my world is a better place with all of you in it.

Prayer: Loving God, I am so grateful for my pastor, my church family, my church's many musicians, and all the technology that enables us to connect. Thank you for being present wherever we are, and for helping me to create sanctuary at home. Amen.