**Reflection for Monday,**

**July 17, 2023**



I took my first swimming lessons in a suburban backyard. I remember the white cement and the turquoise of the water. I remember my toes-shins-thighs-stomach sinking into to the pool, first with a shock of cold and then a sense of refreshment.

At first it was just bobbing up and down, and then blowing bubbles into the water. This swimming thing was going to be easy!

And then the swim teacher told us we were going to float. Okay. “Lie back,” she told me. But this didn’t make sense. How could I lay myself down on the water? I knew that I’d go under.

Gently, she cupped the back of my head, promising that I wouldn’t go under, and a leaned back. With a little kick, my toes reached for the surface and I found myself in a wobbly float. Miraculous.

How clearly some things stay in memory. The cool water bathing my back, the warm hand now supporting lightly beneath my back, and sunlight warming my face. I closed my eyes in the luxury of it.

This memory came to me when my spiritual director told me about Flora Wuellner’s “Soaking Prayer” from *Prayer, Stress, and our Inner Wounds.* I offer it to you as summer’s spiritual idyll, a place to soak in God’s presence and discover our miraculous ability to be buoyant, to stay afloat knowing that there’s a gently guiding hand ready to support us. You can close your eyes and take in the ease and peace of it.

In faith,

Elizabeth

**Soaking Prayer**

Trust your feelings and your inner readiness;

never push yourself into any form of prayer that does not seem right for you.

In this prayer, we do not ask for anything.

We just rest, let go, breathe in and soak up the healing light of God which embraces us.

Some people prefer the images of water, wind, color, healing hands, wings and so on.

Put this time of prayer under Christ’s spirit.

Rest…let go…breathe in and out…breath gently and slowly.

Picture yourself surrounded by luminous light.

Picture it flowing through the top of your head,

slowly flowing through your tight facial muscles, relaxing them,

especially around your eyes and jaw.

Picture it now as a river of light

quietly flowing through your whole body,

calming, relaxing, releasing every part.

Think of every breath as if you are breathing the breath of life

which God breathes into every being.

Divine love is flowing into every part of your being.

Rest in it, breathe it, and allow it to work its transforming renewal within.

If thoughts wander, don’t worry. Let them play like children in the sun.