

Dancing With The Geese

I saw two wild geese today watching my busy world. They seemed almost like statues, so still they were. The pair was perched on a small peaceful outcrop of grass sanity in the midst of total concrete overload. That piece of land always went unnoticed, but yet stubbornly sturdy, thick and strong and green right by the main entrance to our local mall. The geese looked like they might be mates. *Perhaps they are only stone* I thought, as my two children and I walked past quickly. *Maybe a publicity marketing stunt for a silly product I don't need or want?* Car after car passed them, as everyone headed into the parking structure. Some drivers honked loudly at the geese, so they would move, fly off, get out of the way. But they didn't move, not a wing, not a feather. They just watched the shoppers. They kept looking, first one way, then the other, their long necks ever so slightly moving left to right, right to left, observing. They didn't seem scared of our world at all.

In the midst of this massive bustle and the massive stress in my own life from work, life, and kids, and too much always left undone, I stopped and stared. I couldn't help myself, even when my son tugged my hand and said, "Ma! We have to hurry! Soccer practice is in an hour" and my daughter who always talked nonstop, went quiet, perhaps a bit curious at my odd behavior, and then reminded me, "Mom, you have to see this one perfect dress. So grown up. I just have to have it." Their insistence quickly brought me back to the tasks at hand, and we went into the mall.

Of course, we were there too long, running errands, shopping needlessly. When I came out to get the car, I expected the geese to be gone, scared away by the noise of city living or perhaps the fear of injury from some stupid human who had decided to lob a stone or two at them. But they were still there, posed quietly, remarkably calm. They stayed close, one looking one way, the other the other way, silently observing the bizarre bustle of us humans who could only run madly every which way right in front of them. They were simply watching our world I realized, perhaps documenting it for their own species. It must certainly have seemed too fast for them, too hurried, and heading nowhere very important. The geese didn't look panicked or stricken. They didn't spread their wings to take off or scurry to a safer or more peaceful spot. Frankly, as I watched, I thought they looked a bit amused.

Sometimes even amidst the endless business of modern life, a gift can appear and startle. You have to stop and take note, slow your pace for a moment to understand it. When you do, a lost memory returns from an earlier time when there was actually more sanity, moderation, and yes, a bit of actual balance in life. It's a gift that can bring a touch of sanity to those of us who are so dedicated, so involved in the modern, indeed a bit insane. We insist on persisting life needlessly and running everywhere too fast, never realizing how overblown or ridiculous the lives we are living so frantically actually are.

I wasn't at all sure I still wanted that life, but I did seem to need it, even require it. Schedules defined me, told me who I was. I rarely paused anymore, even though I loved quiet and solitude when I was young. My life was now super involved – job, family, kids, friends, and sadly and too rarely, a husband. I had become so busy I had become an uncaring person, wrapped too tightly inside a world I could neither pause nor change,

sort of like the video or DVD you replay over and over and never stop or pause or eject because you can't take the time to find and insert a new one. Still, I wanted a quiet moment now and then to reflect, find a bit of peace, maybe even seek out a bit of nature. Then suddenly, indeed ironically, here it was right in front of me! Surprise! I was actually enjoying my few moments with one of nature's finest – a pair of visiting wild geese right here at the mall.

We all need a quiet, if brief, moment to discover a bit of new, feel a new sense of peace, take in nature, and yes, even enjoy a calm moment with a couple of geese. So I paused right there in the parking lot, took my children's hands in mine, and said to them. "See those two geese? Right over there? They're waiting for us, watching us. They think we're too busy, so they're telling us to slow down, notice our own world like they live and enjoy theirs."

Both children paused along with me and glanced over at the geese, finally curious. Suddenly my son said, "I really like geese. They're beautiful. I watch them when they're flying over our woods at home. They always look like they're dancing in the sky." I'd never realized he did that. Then my daughter concurred, actually agreeing with her little brother for once. "They sure are beautiful sitting there in that spot. All decked out. They look ready to celebrate. Maybe go to a party?" Then she laughed, as only she could. I'd forgotten that beautiful laugh. I was always too busy running everywhere to notice it anymore.

We walked a bit more slowly then, the three of us joined in common thought. We found our car and headed home. Dad was home early and as usual waiting for us to come back from somewhere. We told him about the geese at the mall. He laughed. "I see them

there too sometimes. I think they come to watch us humans running crazy like, always getting nowhere. Maybe they're the same two geese that swoop down here sometimes and pace around our backyard." He was obviously surprised, but happy that we'd seen the geese too. Who would have thought? We were all talking together for once, not just looking for new reasons to head somewhere without him.

I suddenly realized he was spending too many evenings alone. So right there and then on that very evening, as the summer sun set, we all went and sat on the patio together and watched, as all that beauty slid below our trees out back. We talked about the day we had all just had, what we had seen and learned about the world around us and ourselves. We shut off the TV and the music, the Smartphones, the computers and the tablets, and we talked, actually talked. We listened too for once. We decided to find more quiet time as a family, see and notice life together more often, and yes, make sure we "danced" with our wild geese friends if they chose to visit again. Maybe we'd learn a bit more about their world and their wisdom along the way and discover our own real selves again too.