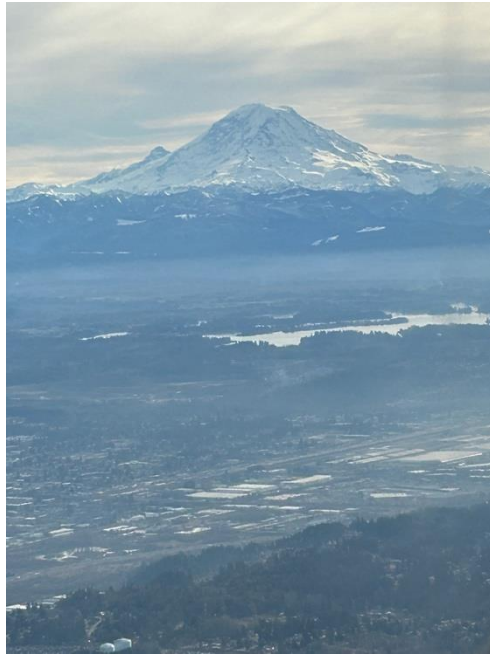


Even THE Mountain Has Ashes



When I was a child, Advent was my favorite season. Because it led to Christmas. As I've made many more trips around old Sol than I thought I ever would, Lent now explains my faith. And it, is the season in our liturgical calendar, that excites me, makes me somber, brings me to reflect on how I can do things better.

I've been in situations when those close to me fade away, as if they are abandoning me. A somewhat recent event explained what our Master went through the night before He died. False accusation after false accusation 'they' (the famous 'them') hurled at him.

Yet His answer was silence. He stood there and took it. That lead to a night of torture.

In His silence, as read again during Holy Week, I find the gifts of the peace of forgiveness, of courage and of persistence and of the hope of eternal wonder and joy.

He saw this through to the very end, which became the greatest beginning mankind ever witnessed. Death was defeated.

'THE' mountain mentioned in the title is called Ranier by some and Tahoma (touches the sky) by those who were here long before Europeans and others settled here. It dominates the skyline like nothing you've ever seen. Because there is nothing around it that reaches to just over half its height of almost three miles. And yes, most people of any race, color, religion or creed call it 'THE' Mountain.

When you suddenly get a peek between the massive Ponderosa pines that dominate the area, the sight of it stuns you, every single time. It is one of the ten most dangerous of its kind on Mother Earth.

I always liked living on the edge.

I read an article this morning that reflected what I feel, what I want to live always in the presence of Him, and as much as possible following only Him.

*From the NYT by **Showkat Nanda**.... As I admired the landscape and reflected on my trip to Gurez, Zahoor Ahmad Lone, a sturdy man with a bushy brown beard and blue eyes, came over to chat. "People think we're unlucky because we don't have the luxuries of cities," he said. "But they don't realize that God has blessed us with better resources."*

Clement