



| Monday, December 2

## Puzzles and Prayer

*Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth! Do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*


*Isaiah 43:18-19*

What simple joy I find in working a jigsaw puzzle! From start to finish, it is a single-minded endeavor that sharpens my focus, heightens my awareness, and draws me deeply into the emerging whole. What is it about this particular image—so pleasing to the eye and comforting to the spirit—that captivates my imagination? Each puzzle is different, and each in its time speaks necessarily to my soul.

Holiday tradition calls for a jigsaw puzzle in progress in our household during the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's. At other times, however, I begin a puzzle not for the sake of recreation and relaxation, but in response to some urge that bubbles from deep within, an internal clock telling me it is time. Time for what? What occurs in the dumping and sorting of pieces that are carefully studied and persistently linked to form first the edges, then individual bits, and finally the whole picture?

Transition—change—formation—transformation. Somehow working a jigsaw puzzle resonates with these life moments, bringing tangibility to intangible experience. In the solitude and focus of picking through the dusty cardboard pieces, the fragments of doubt and fear and grief living in my mind and heart in times of change are moved toward something new. I work on the puzzle with a deliberate patience that is not characteristic of my way of being. My breathing slows, my mind clears, my spirit calms. The work becomes a prayer, and slowly, the pieces of the puzzle and the fragments of my life come together to present a whole that could not be seen in the individual parts. I need the serenity of that process, and trust that it is real. God is present, and something is happening to clear my vision, restore my soul, and lead the way to something new.

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*Gentle Spirit, thank you for your abiding presence in times of change. Help me to trust that you are at work in my life and the lives of others around me, guiding, guarding, making all things new. Amen.*

- Bobbi French