



Lenten Reflection for Monday, March 28th

Emily Flake

You can listen to the reading and reflection by clicking [here](#).

Isaiah 65:16 - 21, 24

Then whoever invokes a blessing in the land shall bless by the God of faithfulness, and whoever takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of faithfulness; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my sight.

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.

I wonder how many people's initial exposure to Christianity was through the Narnia series. I had some minimal experience with the Bible as a child – notably a big, illustrated Children's Bible (the reading of which enabled me to crush the Bible category on Jeopardy), but no real religious training to speak of. It wasn't until I was drawn into the allegorical world of Narnia and Aslan, its Christ-like Lion, that I started to forge an emotional connection with some of the stories I knew.

In the final book of the series (spoilers ahead, sorry) the Narnia we have come to know and love is destroyed, and Aslan leads the characters to a new and even more glorious Narnia. Reading those passages as a child troubled me just as reading this passage in Isaiah does now. The promise of a new world brings

up more questions for me than answers. A slight tug of sadness for the lost, imperfect world. A skepticism that a world without pain could exist. A twinge of feeling that maybe it's when we learn to accept the world's imperfections as it is that we will find the perfection of genuine harmony, and then fear that I will be asked to accept the common tragedies of the world. But why am I resisting what is such objectively good news? Why am I looking this gift horse so closely in the mouth? I think I need to pay more attention to the beginning of this passage, and swear an oath in the land trusting that whether in the old Jerusalem or the New, it is in God's hand, and all according to His will.



Emily Flake is a cartoonist and writer who lives in Windsor Terrace with her husband John, and daughter Augustine (and an absolutely enormous cat named Gizmo). She has been attending Holy Apostles since 2011.