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The following is a KSCO commentary. Here is Kay Zwerling:

I wrote this story about my mother in 1981, two years after her death. I was studying clinical philosophy at that time, a new discipline, which was deep, personal, and analytical, and while I was still missing my mom, I thought about her a great deal then.

Parents and children have powerful and intimate relationships and perspectives about each other – sometimes positive, sometimes negative, and sometimes neutral. Here I reveal my mother through my own appreciation of being a child, a parent, and a grandparent. I address a philosophical problem, that of finding a sense of groundedness in response to the universal human problem of the abyss – that is, the lack of meaning and aloneness – or nothingness. My mother found her ground in God, and in so many ways, now I do, too.

This is called “My Mother’s Ground”.

She came to America from Greece in 1912, or thereabouts, at the age of 16. The fourth in a family of six children, quite poor, she had been a young schoolteacher in her village. Her sister and brother-in-law living in New York sent her the money to join them in the land of hope and opportunity.

She met and married my father, had three children, became a widow at 42. With the three of us married, or gone soon after, she remained alone in the big house, and somehow managed to make the money last.

We worried and wondered at her aloneness every night. She would say to me “God will take care of me, I’m not afraid.” God was my mother’s ground.

An invalid for six years, and in need of continual custodial care, my 82-year-old mother spent her final years in a local convalescent home. At times, she was amazingly alert – other times, forgetful. Most often, strangely peaceful and content. In the early days of her confinement, she would often ask in bewilderment “Por que el Dios mi hizo esto ” (Why did God do this to me?)

Interestingly, after her second stroke, she communicated almost exclusively in Spanish, her native tongue, despite the fact that she had been quite articulate in English.

What made it possible for my mother to face each day with valor, even a smile? Her philosophy, which she affirmed each day when we were together, and that was every day, “Todo lo que hace Dios es para bien” (Everything that God does is for good). God was my mother’s ground.

In a way, I envied her very much, but I do not believe she ever allowed herself to see the abyss. She chose very early in her life to insulate herself from the anxiety of nihilism by a total and daily commitment to the will of God.

What a fascinating and incongruous polarity of personality was my mother: A most gentle benign imposition of an iron will in areas concerning her children, and a personal complete and total surrender to the will of God. Indeed, God was my mother’s ground.

For KSCO, this is Kay Zwerling.

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