

Grounded

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It's rare that my chiropractor and my spiritual director offer me the same advice, but when they do, I think it's a sign that I'm supposed to pay particular attention.

Early on, my chiropractor would harp on me about having my head in the clouds and disassociating physically, and she would tell me I needed to connect with the ground. Literally. Put my feet on the ground and feel them connect to the earth. Our bodies are built to be sustained that way, with large leg and hip bones and calves and quads and glutei maximi. It was only when she said this that I figured out I have spent so much of my recent years feeling more like a marionette—being lifted up by the shoulders. Which, of course, doesn't work at all.

When I begin my spiritual direction sessions, we always pray, and my director makes sure that my feet are on the ground. We've not talked about why we do that, but every spiritual director I've ever had does this, and they are all smarter than I, and it works. As I settle into prayer, my chiropractor's voice echoes in my head. So I'm working on being physically spiritual, or spiritually physical. One of those. I think.

A few years ago during some continuing education, I learned that the word in Genesis 2 for earth is best translated as the "topsoil of the fertile ground." That's the stuff the writer of Genesis says we're made of—the topsoil. We come from the ground that is beneath our feet.

To pray with feet firmly planted is to reconnect with our best selves, the selves made at creation in the image of God. Maybe that's the part of us that does the healing, too, when we are hurt. We are at our best and strongest when we are grounded.

The word *grounded* reminds me of liturgy, too, the liturgy of Ash Wednesday—"remember you are dust/earth/topsoil, and to dust/earth/topsoil you will return." Most beautiful and true for me, though, is the funeral liturgy: "You are immortal, the Creator and Maker of all. We are mortal, formed of the dust, and to dust we shall return. All of us go down to the dust, yet even at the grave we make our song. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia."

I am grounded. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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