We Are Flesh. We Are Divine.

What's popping, people?
It's Dante — out here this morning in the Centennial Arboretum, making a photograph of this wild tree that caught my eye.

Half of it is dead.
The right side is completely dried out, decaying.
But the other half? Vibrant. Alive. Bursting with green leaves, blooming like nothing's wrong.

And I just stood there thinking — *damn*, that's life, right?

We're all split like that tree.

- One side of us is decaying, hurting, grieving.
- The other side? Still pushing forward, blooming, striving, catching light.

There's this duality I see everywhere —
life and death, pleasure and pain, light and darkness.

As a photographer, this is what I look for — patterns.
Patterns in nature. Patterns in light. Patterns in human behavior.

Whether it's the way the light falls on the sidewalk…
or the way someone gestures to hail a cab,
there's this constant dance between **order and chaos**.
It's always there.

And as humans, we're flesh.
We cut.
We bleed.
We feel sorrow, pain, greed.

We're imperfect.
We're finite.

But weirdly, **that's what makes us divine.**

> ***It's the simple fact that we're here on this earth temporarily that gives it all meaning.***

The fragility of life is what makes it powerful.

This morning, after my prayer to **Saint Michael the Archangel**, I thought about his name.

Michael means: *"Who is like God?"*

That hit me hard.

Because I *do* want to be like God.
And I know how crazy that sounds in the modern world, where people laugh at anything spiritual, where the divine is ignored, where we're told to be small, stay in our lane.

But I'm asking —

> ***Am I allowed to strive to be like God?***

Not in an arrogant way. Not in some fake, almighty sense.

But in a *real*, humble way — where I recognize:

- I'm flesh.
- I will die.
- I mess up. I fall short.
- But I also carry *the divine signature* within me.

Look at your hands.
The creases in your palms.
The flow of blood through your veins.
The breath you're taking right now.

It all mirrors the **patterns in nature** —
the lines in leaves, the roots of trees, the branching of rivers.

We are *not separate* from the natural world.
We *are* it.

The divine isn't some lofty thing in the clouds — it's embedded in your skin.

And if that's true, then maybe we really *can* strive to live like God.

I think about **Jesus Christ** —
God in the flesh.
The Logos. The Word. The Reason.

If Jesus was the divine made flesh,
and we are made in the image of God,
then following His way — the ethics, the love, the courage —
is how we embody the divine in everyday life.

Be Like the Tree

Rooted in the dirt.
Reaching for the sky.

Our roots are sunk deep in struggle —
sin, lust, greed, hunger, pain.
But our branches?
They stretch toward the heavens, toward light, toward truth.

That's what trees do.
And that's what we're here to do.

This world wants you to dim your light.
To play it safe.
To just get by.

But I refuse.

I was made to shine.
To evolve.
To fall and get back up.
To sin and repent.
To create and express and strive.

We don't live forever. But our soul can echo through what we leave behind.

Through art.
Through photography.
Through love.
Through becoming.

Don’t shy away from the divine.

Wake up.
Feel the breeze on your skin.
Listen to the birds.
Be grateful you get to breathe, to touch, to see, to *feel*.

And create.
Use your light.

> ***We are flesh bound by gravity —***
> ***who cut, who bleed, who feel sorrow, pain, and greed...***
> ***but we are also like God.***