

**Devotion, Week of January 7, 2024**  
**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

**Joe Palooka, Tropical Storm, and Me**

Joe Palooka was a comic book boxer from the 1930's through the 1950's, with films, radio shows, and a TV program as well. Joe Palooka was important to me because he was a clean boxer, and he became my hero. Santa left me a Joe Palooka boxing bag one year, and my father and I watched his TV boxing bouts on our black and white TV. The boxing bag was counterbalanced on the bottom and rebounded when you hit it.

This devotional came out of the notion of rebounding. On our first night at sea we hit very rough weather. All the passengers struggled to stay in their beds and deal with, at times, being dumped on the floor, as well as closet doors and drawers flying open, and shower doors shattering. After several hours and constant forces that seemed to threaten to capsize us or flip us over, I prayed to God to protect us – I didn't bargain with God about this – I didn't promise anything in return - I just asked. As I continued to be buffeted by these incredible forces, I thought of Joe Palooka, who always bounced back, and I decided that this was what I was going to do, as well as protect Jeanne from being thrown across the room. I held on to her to protect her. It was a long night, and I never heard anyone coming to rescue anybody, but at some point things began to calm down. I decided that God had taken over and rescued us from harm. I had put myself in God's hands, not knowing what would happen. And God protected us, and the other ship passengers. This is what God does – God takes care of God's children, when we are the most frightened and feeling the most out of control.

May your week be one of calmness and gratitude. Jim

*Jeanne*