



Of Seeds and Flowers



[Click Here to Donate](#)

Volume 32 Issue 3 – Founded in 1982

April 2015

William R. Pfeiffer – Director

Mary's Field, Ltd. - PO Box 99 - Hebron, CT 06248 - support@marysfieldltd.com - [Facebook.com/MarysField](https://www.facebook.com/MarysField)

AN EASTER PARABLE

Sometimes we let our theologizing, our scholarship, our egos get in the way of the simple truth. The following story touched my heart.

The preacher had just given a powerful message about how the human spirit can be perpetually renewed by God's spirit. It was a magnificent display of the preaching genius that Afro-American preachers have; rhythmic cadences, loud and lyrical language.

And he continued, "I am going to end this morning by telling you something that happened when I was in the seminary", as he dabbed his forehead with a white handkerchief.

"I went to the University of Chicago Divinity School. Every year they used to have what was called 'Baptist Day.' It was a day when they invited the entire Baptist community in the area to visit the school basically because they wanted the Baptist dollars to keep coming in," he explained.

"On this day everyone was to bring a bag lunch to be eaten outdoors in a grassy picnic area giving the students, faculty and visitors a chance to mingle."

"On every 'Baptist Day' the school would invite one of the greatest minds in theological education to give a lecture. This one year the great Paul Tillich came to speak."

The preacher paused to sip some

water.

"Dr. Tillich spoke for two and a half hours, proving that the historical Resurrection was false. He quoted scholar after scholar and book after book, concluding that since there was no such thing as the historical Resurrection, the African-American religious tradition was groundless, emotional mumbo-jumbo, because it was based on a relationship with a risen Jesus, who, in fact never rose from the dead in any literal sense."



The preacher told us that Dr. Tillich ended his talk with a sweeping, "Are there any questions?" The silence in the packed lecture hall was deafening.

Then, finally, after about 30 seconds-it seemed like five minutes-an old, dark-skinned preacher with a head full of short-cropped woolly white hair stood up in the back of the auditorium.

"Docta Tillich, I got a question," he said as all eyes turned toward him. He reached into his bag lunch and pulled out an apple.

"Docta Tillich... "CRUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH "My question is a simple question." CRUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH,

MUNCH "Now I ain't never read them books you read... "CRUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH. .. "and I can't recite the Scriptures in the original Greek ... " CRUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH ...

"I don't know nothin' about Niebuhr and Heidegger ... " CRUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH, MUNCH He finished the apple. Then he began to lick his fingertips and pick his teeth.

"All I wanna know is: This apple I just ate-was it bitter or sweet?"

Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and answered in exemplary scholarly fashion: "I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven't tasted your apple."

The white-haired preacher dropped the core of his apple into his crumpled paper bag, looked up at Dr. Tillich and said calmly, "Neither have you tasted my Jesus."

The 1,000-plus in attendance could not contain themselves.

The auditorium erupted with roaring laughter, cheers and applause. Paul Tillich promptly thanked his audience and left the lectern.

"Taste and see the goodness of the Lord", says the Scriptures. God is to be tasted, to be enjoyed, to be encountered, to be experienced, not just reflected upon. He rose and sent His spirit so that we would have life and have it to the FULL--that our joy

would be COMPLETE.

We cannot be reminded too often that the biggest problem in our spiritual lives is living and praying as *if God is absent*.

My prayer for you this Easter is

that you may experience, truly feel the presence of God in your life; that you may swim in His/Her love; be cushioned by His/Her unconditional love for YOU; that you may experience yourself as the joy of

God!

See! The winter is past: the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth: the season of singing has come. Song of Solomon 2,11-12. He is Risen! Happy Easter!

A Drop of Rain... A Bit of Sun...

THE AUCTION

An upstate New York man was rich in almost every way. His estate was worth millions. He owned houses, land, antiques and cattle. On the outside he had it all but on the inside he was very unhappy. His wife was growing old and the couple was childless. He had always wanted a little boy to carry on the family legacy. Miraculously, his wife became pregnant in her later years and she gave birth to a little boy. The boy was severely handicapped but the man loved him with his whole heart. When the boy was five, his mom died. His father was devastated but it caused him to draw closer to his special son. At age 13 the boy's birth defects cost him his life and the father died soon after from a broken heart.

The estate was auctioned before hundreds of bidders. The first item offered was a painting of the boy. No one bid. They waited like vultures for the riches. Finally the poor housemaid who helped raise the boy offered \$5.00 for the painting and easily took the bid. To everyone's surprise the auctioneer ripped a hand written will from the back of the picture. This is what it said: "To the person who thinks enough of my son to buy this painting, to this person, I give my entire estate." The auction was over. The selfish crowd walked away in shock and dismay.

Remember the gospel story, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant's search for fine pearls. When he found one really valuable pearl, he went back and put up for sale ALL THAT HE HAD and bought it." MT. 3, 45-46

Your pearl, your pearl; what is YOUR PEARL? What or who would motivate **you** to sell all that you have to possess the Pearl of great price?

Differently put: If you had only 1 year to live and I could promise you complete success in just one thing in your life, what or Who would you choose? Like the man in the story on the front page, your sweet Jesus?

Late have I loved you, O
Beauty so ancient and yet so
new, late have I loved you.
You were inside me all the
time, but I was scurrying
around outside looking for you
everywhere. Confused, I threw
myself this way and that,
drawn by the beauty of your
creation. You were always
inside me. But I was not
always in you. Created things
kept me from you. But you
shouted and shouted and
finally made me hear. Your
blazing light finally made me
see. Your fragrance finally
came to me, and now I pant
for you. I tasted your sweetness
at last, and now I hunger and
thirst for only you. You touched
me, and now I am on fire.
And so shall I be for the rest
of my life. - AUGUSTINE



For more content from Mary's Field, click the following link to visit our Facebook page or copy and paste the link into your browser: Facebook.com/MarysField. We will be updating our Facebook page daily with spiritual wisdom, stories that will touch your heart, insight into marriage and contemporary social issues, and prayers that will inspire. **You do not need a Facebook page to view our Facebook page.**

Vision and Reality

The MANHATTAN DECLARATION has produced a scholarly paper entitled, "What is Marriage". The authors are Sherif Girgis, Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy, Princeton University, Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University and Ryan Anderson, Ph. D. candidate in Political Science, University of Notre Dame.

Research, study, documentation, logic, psychology, sociology, jurisprudence, NO THEOLOGY, NO BIBLE involved; a dangerous piece of work if you really want to think about the issue. It is the type of academic work that needs to be inserted into the discussion on marriage if the discussion is to be truly an honest and intellectual exchange and just hot emotional assumptions based on uninformed, unstudied opinion on both sides of the issue. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not to their own facts. No one should be allowed to be a part of this serious, critical debate from this point on without reading studies like this one.

Fifty years from now it will most essential that our society, our country, indeed the world make the objectively true decision about how we define and protect marriage. How many times have you heard the words, "If we only knew then what we know now". **What if "then" is "now"?** "The terrible "ifs" accumulate", Churchill.

Remember asbestos, lead in paint, DDT, and more recently ethanol, that cost billions to introduce and now is another NO-STUDY, QUICK DECISION DISASTER. Check the lawyers on T.V. hawking lawsuits for bad side effects, quickly introduced drugs. Only the TRUTH, OBJECTIVE TRUTH works and frees in this world.

A few years ago I wrote a thoughtful, non-inflammatory piece in our newsletter about the importance of protecting the institution of marriage. I got a copy of the newsletter placed in my school mailbox with the word homophobe written across it.

I wanted to respond (but, never did) with the information that Cindy and I, at Mary's Field Retreat Center, on two separate weekends, welcomed, shopped for, cooked for, did dishes for, cleaned for, shared and hugged 35 men from the Greater Hartford Gay Alliance. At the end of the weekends we received a three foot square card thanking us for our love and ministry. Hardly homophobic! I wanted to ask my "homophobic detractor", when was the last time you invited 35 gay men to your home to spend a weekend? We almost never respond to unfair criticism but every once in a while you have to say NO.

The decision on "What is Marriage" is essential to our future. If you are serious about this issue do read the study. Electronic copy available at: ManhattanDeclaration.org

A STORY WRITTEN BY THE SURGEON WHO EXPERIENCED IT.

I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face post-operative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed. She will be thus, from now on. To remove the tumor in her cheek, I had to cut the little nerve.

Her young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed, and together they seem to tell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. Who are they, I ask myself, he and this wry-mouth have made, who gaze at and touch each other 50 generously, greedily?

The young woman speaks. "Will my mouth always be like this?" she asks. "Yes," I say, "it will. It is because the nerve was cut." She nods, and is silent. But the young man smiles. "I like it," he says. "It is kind of cute." All at once I know who he is. I understand, and I lower my gaze. Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth, and I am so close I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate hers, to show her that their kiss still works."

The world is looking for married couples who are living witnesses to the joy of marital intimacy.



Speaking Softly

Some days you're the pigeon; some days the statue.

This is dedicated to pigeons only.

St. Teresa of Avila was a marvelous, wonderful medieval contemplative. In her, there was no difference between **what she said and how she lived her life**. She was often "the statue", being dropped upon, because she had great ideas but she always lived like a pigeon.

If you read and pray her following words over and over (with an open heart, not head) and let them sink in, like a gentle spring rain, you will possess your soul. Please, come back to being the pigeon; not to drop on anyone but rather TO FLY.

"Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you.

All things pass. God does not change.

Patience achieves everything.

Whoever has God lacks nothing.

God alone suffices."

"We are made with a God-shaped hole in the middle of our being. No matter what else we try to fill it with, nothing but God works."

"To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one's life makes no sense if God did not exist." - *Cardinal Suhard*

