



Of Seeds and Flowers

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Volume 33 Issue 2 – Founded in 1982

March 2016

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Shine Brother, Shine! - Shine Sister, Shine!

You're one of a kind. There is no one quite like you. Hug yourself! Feel your goodness! Celebrate your uniqueness. Let your heart sing and your feet dance. You are in fact one of the "Kings Kids." You are an eagle, not a prairie chicken. Soar! Stretch out your wings. Float on the wind. Let it carry you where it will. Feel the freedom! Relax and enjoy the glory which is you. Have you ever experienced yourself as the joy of God? That's worth reflecting on for a few years.

It's Easter time. "All I want is to know Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection flowing through me," says St. Paul. Down with all the fear and pessimism and anxiety and depression. Truly, we are a victorious people. Let's stand up and be who we are. A philosopher once cried out, "I'll believe in your God and in redemption when you Christians look and act more redeemed." Emmanuel, God is with us! – indeed, with YOU.

I'm reminded here of a question put to me back in the late 60's. "If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

Where has all the joy gone? One of the surest signs of God's presence is joy.

Hug someone. Allow yourself to be hugged. If you resist, it tells you something about yourself, doesn't it? – not free, don't like yourself, not worthy? I believe we need 2 hugs a day just to survive, 4 for maintenance and 8 to grow on. – go after it. Get hugged. Be a hugger! One of the most difficult tasks I have is trying to convince people that they are going around shining like the sun. No one wants to believe it.



This isn't just Pollyanna, "pie in the sky," let's pretend, a song and dance around the Maypole stuff – like psyching up a group of Amway salesmen – our "joy is supposed to be FULL," says the gospel. If our joy is truly supposed to be full then,

many of us are living in practical heresy, although I can't remember anyone ever being burnt at the stake for a lack of joy. We Christians are always careful to burn people for the big things, like not believing in the Trinity or the Virgin birth because, if it came down to joy, we would all have to burn – justice and charity too! How we need to make Christians be accountable for what they say and Churches for what they preach! Let your heart shine, let your spirit shine, let your face shine.

Be Risen! Look Risen! Act Risen!

**Shine Brother, Shine!
Shine Sister, Shine!**

If I hear it, I forget it.

If I say it, I remember it.

If I do it, I know it.



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Vision and Reality

“I believe there aren’t five people in the world that see reality as it is.” - *Merton*

Destroy family and marriage, the most basic institutions in society, and you will destroy the society. Deny this truth; challenge this truth; contest this truth, little by little, water down this truth, and society is doomed.

If this is true, it is true everywhere! ONLY, only the truth frees. To the degree that you are involved in non-truth, to that degree you are bound. **Good intentions** are NEVER a substitute for the **truth**. Most, most people who speak against marriage and family have given it little **thought, reading, research, prayer, etc.** from which comes *genuine knowledge, insight and wisdom*. On the contrary, they have given the whole issue MUCH EMOTION. “I feel, I feel, I feel,” not, after research, reading discussion, praying, **I THINK**.

“A system of morality which is based on relative emotional values is a mere illusion, a thoroughly vulgar conception which has nothing sound in it and nothing true.” Socrates. “A man in a state of passion (pure emotion) is like a man asleep, drunk or insane.”

- *Aristotle*

Remember: There is no right way to do the wrong thing. “We must not become comfortable with evil that has **grown respectable with age**.” - *Henry David Thoreau*

Theologians don’t change the church; holy people, praying people, contemplative people, and saints do. Too bad there aren’t more contemplative leaders in ALL churches. Change the leaders and you will change the institution. **Transformed people, transform people!** Transformed clergy, transform people! Transformed parents, transform people! Transformed governors..., transformed presidents and senators..., transformed judges..., transformed professors... We have a “Serious Soul” problem! Too much time, money and effort is spent on symptoms. Fix the soul, the REAL CAUSE of our problems and we will finally have **a genuine, lasting fix!**

If the pastor is a saint, the people will be very good.
If the pastor is very good, the people will be good.
If the pastor is good, the people will be lukewarm.
If the pastor is lukewarm, the people will be bad.
If the pastor is bad, the people will be devils.



We see the bumper sticker: “If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.” Education does change people to some degree but ONLY ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD does the full job!

A town in Ohio has declared the Easter Bunny must now be called the “Spring Bunny”. I heard this piece of news on the radio and the newscaster suggested a quick solution to all this nonsense, as she put it. The solution: GROW UP. **The “sensitivity coma” continues to spread.** There is no “constitutional right” not to be offended although in Sweden it is now illegal to say anything that might offend someone. Fill the jail!

Don’t deliberately torture yourself by giving in to depression. **Happiness makes for a long life and makes it worth living.** Enjoy yourself and be happy; **don’t worry all the time. Worry never did anybody any good, and it has destroyed many people.** It will make you **old before your time**. Jealousy and anger will **shorten your life**. A cheerful person with a good attitude will have a good appetite and **enjoy his food**. - *Sirach 31-21*.

Take these words and chew on them. Let them sink down into your heart until the words become a reality in your life. **FEEL THE FREEDOM.** “I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE JOY AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL.” - *JESUS*, -the wisest person I know.

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

PERMISSION

Here's a gift suggestion that is sure to please: Give yourself and everyone else in your life PERMISSION.

Give yourself permission to do. Instead of just talking or dreaming and wishing about your heart's desire this year, do it.

Learn something new. Take up a hobby. Exercise. Develop new friendships. Change jobs. **Do something serious about your spiritual life, your marriage, your prayer life, and your children.**

Whatever has been on your "secret" list of things you've always wanted to do, grant yourself a favor: Do it now, once and for all.

Give yourself permission not to do. You don't have to maintain the house in perfect order. Your desk at work needn't be completely clear of assignments when you leave.

You don't need to spend time with everyone who seeks your company. Allow yourself not to cook, clean or work so much. This year, just be. **Being comes before doing.**

Give yourself permission to feel. It's okay to be sad. It's okay to be happy - TRULY happy - too. If you're tired, let yourself rest. If you're bored, walk through it and find something stimulating to do.

Neither positive nor negative emotions last forever, and you can't have one without the other. Let yourself feel. If you don't do it now, you'll need to face your feelings later. Get ahead of the game. Give yourself permission to stop feeling guilty, resentful, or overwhelmed by a sense of responsibility. You needn't take on other people's feelings because they're not handling their own emotions well. Choose to feel your own feelings, and let others take responsibility for theirs.

Sound like a strange gift list? Look closer, for the unseen benefits are the real treasure. By giving yourself permission to do or not to, to feel or stop feeling, you'll feel less tired. You'll have less over which to breed resentment. Instead, you'll have increased energy and a renewed interest in life - yours as well as others.

Your hope and vitality will soar as you feel free to be yourself, to love yourself, to live life. And while you're at it, give permission to the others on your list, too. If you permit them to do what they need to do, let them off the hook for things which aren't their responsibility anyway, allow them to feel - really feel - the emotions which are genuinely theirs, or encourage them to enjoy life by ridding themselves of the unnecessary burdens of guilt and resentment. You will have given them a wonderful gift: respect. If you allow others to be themselves, they will often return the favor. In granting permission, then, you've really hit a "two-for-one" sale.



Happy Shopping! Miquela Rivera, Ph.D.

"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia."

Speaking Softly

So very happy to report that Cindy, my wife, is continually getting stronger and stronger from her January stroke. She is now walking, most of the time, without a cane and is slowly taking up household chores. The rehab continues. Thank you for all of your kind wishes, support and prayers. It is working!!

About 6 weeks after I was ordained a priest in 1955, I had to cover a parish for a priest who died suddenly. The parish was deep into the "coal regions" of Pennsylvania. I had to celebrate the Eucharist for the parishioners in the main parish but also for a very small mission church about 10 miles from the main parish. It was near a military base and most of the people in the church were soldiers.

When I got to the church I went directly to the sacristy to vest for the Eucharist. The sacristy was about 6 ft. by 8 ft. -very small, but I have never forgotten the words that hung above the vesting table. They read: "Celebrate, O priest, as if this were your **first mass, your last mass, your only mass.**"

I think of these words often, and am moved deeply by them, before I celebrate the Eucharist for my family each Sunday. I am about to go downstairs now and celebrate the Eucharist this morning and I will do so better for having allowed these words to sink into my heart and take root and make me realize what a marvelous thing is about to happen.

Just suppose the Eucharist was celebrated only once every ten years in each country and the only way you could get into the stadium was to purchase a ticket. Can you imagine the scurrying, the money that would exchange hands etc., to be present at that Eucharist? - and with the great bonus of being able to receive God in the Eucharist at communion time? You and I can do this **every Sunday** as we celebrate the Eucharist. What a privilege! Who would not like to be at The Last Supper, sacramentally? How easily we take great things for granted!! How will your celebration be next Sunday? -and the Sunday after and...

