



Of Seeds and Flowers



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William R. Pfeiffer – Director

Mary's Field, Ltd. - PO Box 99 - Hebron, CT 06248 - 860.530.1253 - support@marysfieldltd.com

Code Blue - Spiritual Emergency

Still looking for peace? Need less stress, less pressure? Heart fragmented? Anxious? How can you hold on to the peace and wholeness that you get from a fruitful time of prayer or a quiet sit on the back porch? If you want to improve your marriage or your relationships in your family or at work this message is for you.

The spiritual life is a life. It takes work and discipline. However there are some practices and truths that are essential and most helpful to the journey. The Trappist monk, *Thomas Keating*, in a marvelous book entitled - **Open Mind, Open Heart. The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel** offers some true wisdom. This is not easy reading but is filled with diamonds.

1. Cultivate a Basic Acceptance of Yourself. Have a genuine compassion for yourself, including all of your past history, failings, limitations and sins. The kind of compassion that you would give to others. GOD TOTALLY KNOWS you and TOTALLY LOVES YOU! Can you believe that? Your basic core of goodness is your TRUE SELF. The acceptance of yourself and your basic goodness is a quantum leap in the spiritual journey. God made you and God doesn't make junk. The hardest job I have is to communicate to people that they are going around shinning like the sun.

2. Practice Unconditional Acceptance of Others. By accepting other people *unconditionally*, you discipline the emotions that push you to get even with others, that want to change others or to get away from them. You allow people to be who they are *with all their idiosyncrasies* and with the particular behavior that is disturbing to you. The situation gets more complicated when you feel you have to correct someone. Try not to correct when you are upset; you will get nowhere. The other persons' defenses get aroused and they will blame the situation on you. Calm down. **First love, then correct** and the other person will feel your genuine concern .PEACE, LESS ULCERS, NO HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, NO NEED TO BE SAVIOR.

3. Practice "Guard or Custody of the heart". This is the practice of releasing upsetting emotions into the present moment. This can be done in one of three ways: **A.)** Do what you are actually doing. **B.)** Turn your attention to some other occupation. **C.)** Give the bad feeling completely to the Lord. Guard of the heart requires the prompt letting go of our likes or dislikes. WOW! When something arises independently of our plans, *we spontaneously try to modify it.* (Sound familiar?) Our first reaction, however, should be **openness** to what is actually happening so that *if our plans are upset, we are not upset.* The fruit of "guard of the heart" is the habitual willingness to change our plans at a moment's notice. It disposes us to accept painful situations as they arise. *No more need to control, to manipulate, to fight, to be angry. PEACE!* The routine of daily life is the pathway to wholeness. The practice of Contemplative prayer is aimed at transforming daily life with its never-ending source of ordinary activities. NO MORE ANXIETY! STRESS IS GONE! -and, truly note well, in this spiritual regimen, you have spent time with the LIVING GOD. -not reflexology, mindful meditation, massage, enneagram, Reiki, Chakras, Chi, Yoga, Positive Energy, Art of Manifesting, etc. etc... (**ALL** of which hold of piece of **God's truth-NOTICE, I did write this!!!**) However, they are NOT GOD, the Divine Therapist, the wholeness, the forgiveness, the Salvation, the healing, the "peace that passes all understanding" -this is the gift that ONLY God can give. Jesus really DID COME for a serious reason FOR ALL MANKIND!!!! THIS can't be ignored without serious risk.

4. Deliberately Dismantle the Emotional Programming of the False Self. The spiritual journey begins when you recognize your own hypocrisy, the false self, the elusory you. Human beings are made for boundless happiness and for peace, and when we start to move in that direction, we don't have to push ourselves. The difficulty is that we are going in the opposite direction most of the time. We tend to identify ourselves with our false self and its concerns,

and the world around us reinforces and stimulates that false self. AMEN!

What false self? Who me? What are some of the false self descriptions? **The need:** to be right; to be perfect, yesterday; to find security in things, money; to control; to manipulate or save others; to people please, for praise; to achieve, to always need to win; to compete- even with God etc., etc .. Or the opposite. **The fear:** of failure; of being used; of being a loser; of flunking with God; of not having enough money; of not being worthy of other's love; of not being able to give enough love; of joy; of relaxation; of grace. See yourself in any of the above? *Welcome to the club!* The danger is, if you wear the mask long enough, *it becomes you!* But once you recognize and accept the hypocrisy, *only by grace, with the help of God*, the journey back to truth is able to begin. "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains only a grain of wheat, but if it dies it produces much fruit." JESUS

Observe the emotions that most upset you and the events that set them off. Emotions never lie. If you are in emotional pain, something is causing it. You can either deal with it or keep walking into it like a brick wall. It needs tending. We pray. We come back to wholeness, peace, a sense of well being, and then we go back to the routines of daily life and too quickly our emotional programs start to go off again. Upsetting emotions immediately start to drain the reservoir of interior silence that you established in prayer or a time of quiet. Sound familiar? On the other hand, if you work at dismantling the energy centers that cause the upsetting emotions the peace of your prayer time will begin to BE YOU.

Many things need to be done here. One small step is to, out loud, 10 times in the morning (after identifying the emotion you want to deal with) say, "I give up my need for" (security, esteem, control, etc.) Even our subconscious needs to be reprogrammed, and these small but firm acts of the will help to begin the process. The **daily practice of contemplative prayer** is most helpful in dismantling the subconscious. The twin engines of the spiritual life are DISMANTLING THE FALSE SELF and CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER. **TRANSFORMED PEOPLE, TRANSFORM PEOPLE.** Meister Eckhart, 14th century mystic said, "We grow by subtraction". A good spiritual director and counselor are recommended.

5. Deliberately Dismantle Excessive Group Identification. This is the practice of letting go of our cultural conditioning, preconceived ideas and over identification with the values, attitudes, and regimen of our particular group. "My cause" pro-life, pro-peace, pro- vegetarian, pro-women, my political party, my country, my nationality, my team, my club, my church, my ministry, my school. **OVER** identification takes you off center. You lose your peace by EXCESSIVE identification with various organizations and causes.

Can you see how each of these practices faithfully observed would lead you to a deeper peace, wholeness, integration of your soul and spirit? Can you see how these practices would improve you as a husband or wife and thus your marriage? Nothing works like the *truth, lived*. Your wholeness will spill over and touch everyone and everything with genuine life. Remember Mother Theresa!

Alexander Solzenitzen says that we, in the West, are suffering from "Spiritual Exhaustion". *We are truly in a state of spiritual emergency.* Time to take the cure.

There is something for everybody in these insights from Father Keating. Over and over, slowly digest them; pray over them. Learn and change and grow. We all need to question, "Why we do the things we do". **If I always do what I've always done, I will always get what I've always got.** Questioning, looking deep into our hearts and souls will help to put us in touch with our false self and hopefully begin the process of purification and transformation. Why go down when you can go up?

"If Christianity has failed, it is not because it has been tried and found wanting but because it has never truly been tried." G.K. Chesterton

The will of god will never take you to where the grace of god will not protect you.

"THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE ARE BEYOND ANYTHING AN ILLUSIONIST CAN PERFORM, BUT GREATER THAN ANY PHYSICAL MIRACLE WAS THE ABILITY OF A MAN NAMED JESUS TO BRING PURPOSE AND MEANING TO LIFE FOR MILLIONS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES. " - "David Copperfield" - Charles Dickens

A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

BLIND HORSE, BELL RINGERS

A man tells about an experience he had. "Just up the road from my home;" he writes, "is a field with two horses in it. Now from a distance each horse looks like any other horse. But if you stop your car, or are walking by, you will notice something quite amazing, quite amazing! Looking into the eyes of one horse you will find that he is blind.

Obviously his owner has chosen not to have him put down, but to make a good home for him. "Now if you stand there long enough and listen a while, you will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around, you will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to the horse's halter is a small bell. The bell lets the blind friend know where the other horse is, so he can follow.

If you continue to stand there long enough and watch these two friends, you'll see that the horse with the bell is always checking on the blind horse and that the blind horse will listen for the bell, and then the blind horse will slowly walk to where the other horse is and nuzzle him, trusting that he will not be led astray.

Later on, when the horse with the bell returns to the barn each evening, you will notice that it stops occasionally and looks back, making sure that the blind friend isn't too far behind to hear the bell, and then moves on till they're both safely back in the barn:'

And that story leads us to give thanks for all the bell ringers in our lives: parents who nurtured and supported us, good friends who stuck with us, teachers who believed in us-anyone who pulled us through, inspired us, led us to a better, holier life. Please, don't forget to thank, love, support, hug, care for, always remember the generous "bell ringers" in your life. God has placed them there JUST FOR YOU.

Japanese Guru

There is a story of a Japanese businessman who had been incredibly successful commercially. He had everything he needed materially and now he decides that he needs to achieve spiritual enlightenment. He goes to visit one of the oldest and most respected gurus in Japan and asks if he may be taught spiritual insight and truth. The old man said that before they could discuss this further they needed to have tea. As custom demanded tea was brought with much care and ceremony and the guru began to pour the tea into the businessman's cup. He filled it to the brim and then continued to pour with the tea overflowing onto the table and then the floor. The businessman, concerned, asks what the guru is doing. "The cup is overflowing; it cannot take anymore," he says. The old man, pausing, looks at the businessman carefully saying, "You are full; when you are empty, come back, and I will teach you the ways of the spirit."

"Hear, O Israel! *The Lord is our God, the Lord alone!* Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. **Drill them into your children.** Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest." Deuteronomy 6: 4-7. 11-14

Let the Holy Spirit set you on fire and let people watch you burn.

For the past 7 nights I have watched two videos my wife, Cindy, created. One on Easter and one on the Blessed mother. They are visual delights and most spiritually nourishing. **NOTHING IS EVER REPEATED!** The sites are: Easter: youtube.com/watch?v=wpbnZGti7fk and The Blessed Mother: youtube.com/watch?v=IHIF767NNZY GOOD STUFF!!



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Speaking Softly

St. Peter Claver attending the sick slaves at Cartagena came upon a young slave dying of a loathsome disease. The young girl who was working with him, overcome by the horrible sight and stench, ran away and Peter Claver cried out after her, "Come back, come back, you are running away from Christ." And she was. Ever since the Incarnation (Christmas) Christ is united with all humanity and to refuse to love and serve one's neighbor is to refuse to love and serve Christ."

He looked down the road and thought he saw an animal.

He came closer and saw it was a man.

He came closer and saw it was his brother.

Remember how Jesus answered the question, "And who is my neighbor?" And the parable of the Good Samaritan followed.

"My brothers, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it? Such faith has no power to save one, has it? So it is with the faith that does nothing in practice. It is thoroughly lifeless. Show me faith without works, and I will show you the faith that underlies my works." James 2.

The question is not: "What do you want to become, but what are you afraid of becoming?"

"Don't judge me because I sin differently than you." Dieter Uchtdorf

Pray for priests and ministers. Some white collar jobs are more difficult than others.

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P.O. Box 99
Hebron, CT 06248**