



Of Seeds and Flowers



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HAPPY THANKSGIVING! HAPPY ADVENT!

THE RHYTHM OF LOVE

Saint John of the Cross, in *The Living Flame of Love*, compares our pre-Advent selves to green logs that have been thrown into a fire, the fire of love. Green logs, as we know, do not immediately burst into flame. Rather, being young and full of moisture, they sizzle for a long time before they reach kindling temperature and take into themselves the fire that is around them. So, too, the rhythm of love: only the really mature can burst into flame within community. The rest of us are still too green, too selfish, too absorbed in self, too damp.

What helps change this is precisely the tension in our lives. In carrying properly our unfulfilled desires, *we sizzle and slowly let go of the dampness of selfishness, the false-self*. In carrying tension we come to kindling temperature and are made **ready for love**.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the renowned Jesuit priest and scientist, noticed that sometimes when you put two chemicals into a test tube they do not automatically unite. They only unite at a higher temperature. *They must first be heated to bring about unity*. There's an entire anthropology and psychology of love in that image.



In order to love we must *first be brought to a higher psychic temperature*. What brings us there? **Sizzling in tension: not resolving the tensions of our lives prematurely**. In marriage: "As iron sharpens iron so one person sharpens another." SLOWLY!! ; not sleeping with the bride before the wedding; not falling into election derangement syndrome; pregnancy patience; waiting for truth and wisdom to prevail; faithfulness, not success; darkness to be overcome with penetrating love; learning how to do NOTHING, **WELL!** --"Be still"... etc. etc..

Surprisingly, when asked by Oprah Winfrey about his 70 year marriage, Billy Graham replied, "We are delightfully incompatible." He knew well how to carry life's tensions. Things take time. **GOOD things ALWAYS take time!!!**

Advent should not be confused with Lent. The crimson-purple of Advent is not the darker-purple of Lent. The former symbolizes yearning and longing, the latter repentance. The spirituality of Advent is about carrying tension without prematurely resolving it so that we do not short-circuit the fullness that comes from respecting love's rhythms. **Only when there is enough heat will there be unity.**

To give birth to what's divine requires the slow patience of gestation. The sublime has to be waited for. In short, that's Advent: The spirituality of Advent is about carrying tension without prematurely resolving it To give birth to what's divine, requires the slow patience of gestation. *Anything worth doing takes a lifetime! Ask Mother Teresa!*

"Be patient, my brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer awaits the precious yield of the soil. He looks forward to it patiently while the soil receives the winter and the spring rains. You, too, must be patient. Steady your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. James 5: 7-8

ALL THE FLOWERS OF ALL THE TOMORROWS ARE IN THE SEEDS OF TODAY.

A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

O, TO BE OLD,GENTLE AND WISE!

A 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud man, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with his hair fashionably combed and shaved perfectly, even though he is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today. His wife of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, he smiled sweetly when told his room was ready.

As he maneuvered his walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of his tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on his window. I love it, ' he stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

Mr. Jones, you haven't seen the room; just wait.' 'That doesn't have anything to do with it, ' he replied. Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged ... it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it.

'It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do.



Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away. Just for this time in my life. Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories!
Irony Reasons to Be Thankful

1. For the teenager who is not doing dishes but watching TV, because that means he is at home and not on the streets.
2. For the taxes that I pay, because that means I am employed.
3. For the mess to clean up after the party, because that means I have been surrounded by friends.
4. For my shadow that watches me work, because it means I am out in the sunshine.
5. For the lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing, because it means I have a home.
6. For the complaining I hear about the government, because it means that we have freedom of speech.
7. For the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot, because it means I am capable of walking and that I have been blessed with transportation.
8. For my huge heating bill, because it means I am warm.
9. For the lady behind me in church that sings off key, because it means I can hear.
10. For the pile of laundry and ironing, because it means I have clothes to wear.
11. For the clothes that fit a bit too snug, because it means I have enough to eat.
12. For the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours; another day to praise God!

I was free for 5 minutes; so I went downstairs and spoke to my family. They seemed like nice people!

VISION AND REALITY

BAD NEWS FOR ALL CATHOLICS, ALL CHRISTIANS, ALL JEWS, ALL PEOPLE OF FAITH AND ALL AMERICANS.

Recently, Archbishop Leonard Blair, of the Diocese of Hartford, wrote in the diocesan newspaper: "For the greater part of the 20th century, Catholics in the United States, were raised to keep their faith to themselves in order to get ahead in a society marked by anti-Catholic bigotry. In the 1960's things measurably improved but the prejudice and bigotry has returned with a vengeance, once again.

Nowhere is this bigotry more evident than in the offensive questioning by two U.S. senators of a Catholic judicial nominee. Although Article VI of the U.S. Constitution (which the senators are sworn to uphold) clearly states that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification for any office of public trust under the United States," one senator asked, "Do you consider yourself to be an orthodox Catholic?" and the other, in a phrase worthy of Darth Vader, said "The dogma lives loudly in you." These words were directed at a nominee who has published an academic paper which concluded that judges "cannot, nor should they try to, align our legal system with the Church's moral teaching when the two diverge." Sad to note that the media reported that "conservatives" were troubled by this line of questioning. Shouldn't ALL AMERICANS BE TROUBLED?"

The senators poisoned the well and then got upset when the nominee refused to take a drink. All Americans, and certainly Christians, need to strongly object to this type of above dangerous, disgraceful, unconstitutional conduct. - or as was wisely recorded in Nazi Germany, "*When they finally came for ME there was NO ONE to object.*" "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

Rabbi: *How will you know when the dawn has arrived?*

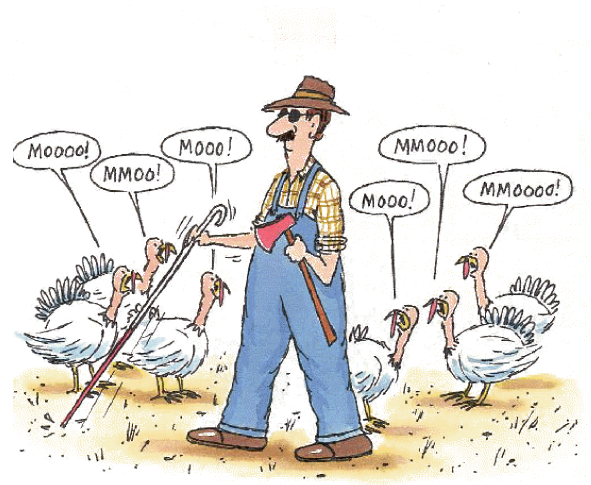
1st Student: When you look into the distance and can make out the first cedar of Lebanon.

2nd Student: When you look out on the horizon and can distinguish between a wolf and a dog.

Rabbi: *You will know that the dawn has arrived when everyone looks into the face of the person next to him and sees his brother or sister.*

THANKSGIVING WISDOM

1. Thank you for the food before us; the family beside us and the LOVE between us.
2. If you are grateful for everything , then whatever you have is enough.
3. What if you woke up today with only the things that you thanked God for yesterday?
4. Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving.
5. Be thankful for what you have. Your life, no matter how bad you think it is, it is someone else's fairy tale.
6. Life is full of give and take. GIVE thanks and take NOTHING for granted.
7. I have been touched by the hearts of some beautiful people, and for that I AM GRATEFUL.
8. "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His love is everlasting." Psalm 107,1.



A Prophets Initiation

When Israel's great prophets were called by God He often initiated them by an interesting ritual. They were asked to physically eat the scroll of the law, to eat their scriptures. What a powerful symbol!! The idea is that they should digest the word of God and turn it into their own flesh so that people were able to see the word of God in a living body rather than in a dead parchment. The task of taking God to others is not that of handing somebody a Bible or some religious tract, but of transubstantiating God, the way we do the food we eat. We have to digest the food and turn it, physically, into the flesh of our own bodies so it becomes a part of what we look like. If we do this with the Word of God, others would not have to read the Bible to see what God is like, they would only have to look at our faces and our lives to see God.

SPIRITUAL READING: Each day or regularly we need to feed our spirit's with good solid food. -the Scriptures, certainly; a life of a saint, devotional literature etc.. God, **OFTEN**, will take a word or a passage and anoint it so that the words and ideas JUMP off the page and penetrate deep into your heart. -like they were written JUST FOR YOU, no matter how often you read the words before. I am sure you have had this happen to you. However, if we are not reading the right kind of books, we lose so many wonderful opportunities for God to grace us. The Bible, certainly, St Teresa of Lisieux, Rohr, Keating, Rolheiser, Medjugorje, Merton, etc. etc. Not to eat is to die! *Slowly!* And sometimes, **not even to know it!** We can become spiritually walking dead people! *Read and let God speak to you!*

"Plenty of people miss their share of happiness, not because they never found it, but because they didn't STOP TO ENJOY IT! William Feather



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