



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 - wisdom@marysfield.org

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

The book, "Unconditional Love" by Father John Powell, tells a story of a young man, Tommy, who is 24 years of age and dying of cancer. At one stage, Tommy comes to Powell and shares with him that he feels there are worse tragedies in life than dying young. I quote part of their conversation:

"What's it like to be only twenty-four and dying?" "Well, it could be worse." "Like what?" "Well, like being fifty and having no values or ideals, like being fifty and thinking that booze, seducing women, power and making money are the real 'biggies' in life ... "

"The essential sadness is to go through life without loving. But it would be almost equally sad to go through life and leave this world without ever telling those you loved that you had loved them." From the mouth of a dying young man we hear a great truth: There are only two potential tragedies in life and dying young is not one of them.

What is tragic is to go through life without loving and without expressing love and affection toward those whom we do love.

"All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you."

"Beloved let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten of God and has knowledge of God. The person without love has known nothing of God, for God IS LOVE." 1 John

"Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another." 1 Thess. 5: 11.

A true story: John lived in New York and each year he would travel to Dallas, Texas to visit his brother Frank for a week. Frank owned a Buick dealership in Dallas. The brothers spent a wonderful week together and after they said their good-byes Frank gave his brother the keys to a brand new Buick convertible.

John left Dallas and not too far out of town because of a detour got lost on a small side road. He stopped in front of an old wooden house to ask for directions. He knocked on the door and a 8 year old boy answered. His mother quickly came behind him and then his brother in a wheelchair.

While the mother gave John directions the 8 year old scooted around him down to the road to look at the car. He couldn't believe such a beautiful car was in front of his house. He saw himself in the deep paint of the fender; he caressed the soft leather seats and admired the beautiful instrument panel.

John thanked the lady for the directions; came down to his car and told the little boy the story of how he got the car. The boy couldn't believe it and this is what he said to John. "I wish I could"... and how do you think he finished this thought? ***'I wish I could be a brother like that.'***

Most of us would have said, *"I wish I had a car like that; I wish I could be that lucky; I wish I had a brother like that."* The little boy must have had a very difficult being patient and kind to his brother in the wheelchair.



A candle loses none of its light by lighting another candle. The world only becomes brighter.

I think that when we get to heaven God is going to ask us three questions:

First: "WHO ARE YOU?" - not, what initials did you have behind your name, how much was your house worth, did you have a corner office, etc., etc .. **You are who you are before God, nothing more, nothing less.**

Second: "HOW DID YOU LOVE?" Especially the members of your family, the people you work with, the poor and needy.

Third: "WHY WEREN'T YOU HAPPY?" I gave you so much, why weren't you happy?
"There are in the end three things that last: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love." **Love is the categorical imperative.** Happy Valentine's Day!!

A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

The Bike Ride

At first I saw God as an observer, like my judge, keeping track of things I did wrong. This way, God would know whether I merited heaven or hell when I died. He was always out there, sort of like the President. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I didn't really know Him at all. Later on, when I recognized my higher power better, it seemed as though life was rather like a bike ride, on a tandem bike, and I noticed God was in the back helping me pedal. I don't know when it was that He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since life with my higher power, that is, making life much more exciting.

When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring but predictable. It was always the shortest distance between the points. But when He took the lead, He knew delightful cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places and at breakneck speeds; it was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, He kept saying, "Pedal, pedal!"

I worried and became anxious, asking, "Where are you taking me?" He just laughed and didn't answer, and I found myself starting to trust. I soon forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure, and when I'd say, "I'm scared," He'd lean back and touch my hand.

He took me to people with gifts that I needed; gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me their gifts to take on my journey. Our journey, that is, God's and mine.

And we were off again. He said, "Give the gifts away, they're extra baggage, too much weight." So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light. I did not trust Him at first, in control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it. But He knew bike secrets, knew how to make it bend to take sharp corners, jump to clear places filled with rocks, fly to shorten scary passages.



And I'm learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant companion, my higher power. And when I'm sure I can't go on anymore, He just smiles and says, "Pedal ... " Author Unknown

"If people want to know what God is like they can look at Jesus. If they want to know what Jesus is like, they should be able to look at His followers." Lucado

Even those who limp go not backwards.

Sunday Eucharist, 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 your God in the Eucharist? -and you and I can do this every Sunday in your nearby Catholic church!!! How easily we take great things for granted!! How was your celebration last Sunday? -and your reception of Communion and your thanksgiving after?

When the Archangel Raphael departed from Tobias and his son so that they could see him no more, they lay for three hours on the ground prostrate on their faces, as the Bible says, " and they Blessed God". Can you imagine what Tobias' response would have been if he had received communion?

"Act on this word. If all you do is listen to it, you are deceiving yourselves." James 1: 22. Don't let familiarity or repetition rob you of grace!! Think of Mary and how she must have received her own Son in the Eucharist. BOW DOWN. HUMILITY. GIFTEDNESS. The immensity of it all!!!

The most popular books in the Bible are: **The First Book of Hesitations, The Second Book of Procrastinations and The Third Book of Wishful Desires.**

VISION AND REALITY

"Keep your church away from my ovaries"; "My body, my decision." QUESTION: "Because you own the house are you free to do violence to your tenants?" ANOTHER QUERY: What, if the 55 million babies that have been aborted, if most of them were in today's workforce and paying into Social Security would the Social Security System be in trouble? Could this be another classic example of the **Law of Unintended Consequences?** -like the decades long abortion culture in China that now has resulted in one woman for every 18 men?

*Happiness tomorrow **always** depends on doing the TRUTH today!!*

RIGHT NOW

God is thinking about ME, RIGHT NOW!

God is LOVING ME, RIGHT NOW!

God is involved in MY LIFE, RIGHT NOW!

God is IN ME, RIGHT NOW! *What are YOU going to DO about it?*

Differently put: If you had only one year to live and I could promise you complete success in just one thing in your life, what would you choose?

In 2018 more people will die from stress, busyness, and "electronic busyness" than from cancer. SOLUTION: Pray for at least 20 minutes a day, unless you are too busy; in which case, pray for ONE HOUR.

Father John O'Brien was a well known retreat-master in the 1940's and 50's. One day an alcoholic came to him begging for help to stop the drinking that was ruining his life and marriage. Fr. O'Brien said here is the solution: "Pray for 20 minutes a day for the next month and come back to see me. At the end of the month you will either have stopped drinking or stopped praying." He stopped drinking! -not always the full solution but certainly a serious part of it. Good advice also for people addicted to porn! Porn is addictive, progressive and deadly!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR 2017 LOVE, PRAYERS AND GENEROSITY! -especially at Christmas time! I would like to thank each of you personally but I just don't have the ability to do this. In 2017, I was able to take a salary of \$17,098 to help pay the bills. Cindy is a generous, loving servant who works for love!! During many talks I used to give I would often sing the words from a song by Robbie Gass: *"From thee I receive; To thee I give; Together we share, and from this we live"*. So true! You have our sincere love and prayers for your goodness to us. A HAPPY AND GRACE-FILLED NEW YEAR!!



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SPEAKING SOFTLY

GOD'S COFFEE: A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life.

Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, *that is the source of your problems and stress*. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink.

What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups... And then you began eyeing each other's cups. Now consider this: Life is the coffee; the jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain Life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of life we live.

Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us."

God brews the coffee, not the cups..... Enjoy your coffee!

"The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything."

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God.

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