



Of Seeds and Flowers



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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

After 21 years of marriage, I discovered a new way of keeping alive the spark of love. A little while ago I had started to go out with another woman. It was really my wife's idea. "I know that you love her," she said one day, taking me by surprise. "But I love YOU," I protested. "I know, but you also love her." The other woman that my wife wanted me to visit was my mother, who has been a widow for 19 years, but the demands of my work and my three children had made it possible to visit her only occasionally.

That night, I called to invite her to go out for dinner and a movie. "What's wrong, are you well?" she asked. My mother is the type of woman who suspects that a late night call or a surprise invitation is a sign of bad news. "I thought that it would be enjoyable to spend some time with you," I responded. "Just the two of us." She thought about it for a moment, and then said, "I would like that very much."

That Friday after work, as I drove over to pick her up I was a bit nervous. When I arrived at her house, I noticed that she too, seemed to be nervous about our date. She waited in the door with her coat on. She had curled her hair and was wearing the dress that she had worn to celebrate her last wedding anniversary. She smiled from a face that was as radiant as an angel's. "I told my friends that I was going to go out with my son, and they were so impressed," she said, as she got into the car. "They can't wait to hear about our meeting."

We went to a restaurant that, although not elegant, was very nice and cozy. My mother took my arm as if she were the First Lady. After we sat down, I had to read the menu. Her eyes could only read large print, half way through the entree's, I lifted my eyes and saw Mom sitting there staring at me. A nostalgic smile was on her lips. "It was I who used to have to read the menu when you were small," she said. "Then it's time that you relax and let me return the favor," I replied.

During the dinner we had an agreeable conversation, nothing extraordinary, but catching up on recent events in each other's lives. We talked so much that we missed the movie. As we arrived at her house later, she said, "I'll go out with you again, but only if you let me invite you." I agreed.

"How was your dinner date?" asked my wife when I got home. "Very nice. Much more so than I could have imagined," I answered.

A few days later my mother died of a massive heart attack. It happened so suddenly that I didn't have a chance to do anything for her. Sometime later I received an envelope with a copy of a restaurant receipt from the same place mother and I had dined. An attached note said: *"I paid this bill in advance. I was almost sure that I couldn't be there but, never-the-less, I paid for two plates - one for you and the other for your wife. You will never know what that night at dinner meant for me. I love you."*

At that moment I understood the importance of **saying in time: "I love you"** and to give our loved ones the time that they deserve. Nothing in life is more important than God and your family. **Give them the time that they deserve**, because both of these things should never be put off till "some other time."

Somebody said if you're a "good Mother", your child will "turn out good". 'Somebody' thinks a child comes with directions and a guarantee. Somebody said it takes about 6 weeks to get back to normal after you've had a baby. 'Somebody' doesn't know that once you're a mother, "normal" is history.

Where have all the mothers gone?? -the babies, the Baptisms, the First Communions, Confirmations, Church weddings, Sundays, Pediatricians, Obstetricians, toy stores, etc...?



A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

There is more than a little unbelief among us believers. God is a hangover, a neurosis, a calling card, a religion, a cause ; and only rarely a living, loving, transforming,, comforting person whose reality penetrates our everyday world.

In his book, *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche presents this story: A madman lights a lantern and, in bright daylight, rushes into a crowded marketplace shouting: 'I seek God! I seek God!' The people in the marketplace ridicule him: 'Has he got lost?' asks one. 'Did he lose his way like a child?' asks another. 'Is he hiding? Or is he afraid of us?' The people yell and laugh at him.

Then the madman turns on them and shouts: 'God is dead, I, tell you, we have killed him, you and I. All of us are his murderers. *But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? How has the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has seen bled to death under our knives.*' Then he, the madman, goes silent, smashes his lantern on the ground, and announces: **'I have come too early. This deed is still too distant and uncomfortable for people to see, and yet they have done this to themselves. They have killed God!'**

How can someone kill God? What Nietzsche is suggesting with this parable is that unbelief, **a certain kind of atheism, is, not something which exists primarily outside the circle of those, people who take themselves as believers.....**It is, first of all, a phenomenon **within the circle of believers.** Simply put, the problem of atheism and unbelief is not so much that the existence of God is denied by certain persons, but that **God is absent in the ordinary consciousness and lives of believers,** God is not enough alive or important in ordinary consciousness. It is in this way, in the words of Nietzsche's madman, **'that we have killed him.'** Why is this? **Why is God not more alive within our ordinary lives and consciousness?**

WISDOM: Richard Rohr told the following, still pertinent, story in 1994: "The person who set up a recent preaching tour in Japan and the Philippines said, "Richard, in Japan, Christians are only one-third of one- percent of the population. I can't promise you big crowds. There might be only twenty or twenty-five people there, **but they are like trumpets.** They haven't heard ten thousand sermons like Americans, **for whom this would be just one more and who would then continue with business as usual.** They will remember much of what you say, **word for word, and it will go out to a hundred other people.** They are that spiritually hungry." Sure enough. I was in Japan in 1981, and this was now 1994 and people from my first tour came up to me and quoted what I had said back then, **word for word. Now that's fertile soil. Word for Word! They changed their lives! TRANSFORMATION!** And they were back for more thirteen years later. **That's a teachable person, a real "disciple."**

The first Christians differentiated themselves from society. Modern Christians blend in.

When we have too many words, we tend **not** to value them, **even if they might contain life for us.** (Sunday after Sunday.) We find it hard to be a **disciple with a beginner's mind because we've heard it all before, from many directions.** In our culture, we suffer from, among other things, a glut of words, a glut of experiences and, yes, a glut of tapes, books, and ideas. We can't absorb it all. I am told that if you imagine the amount of information available to the ordinary person as one unit at the time of Jesus, it took until the year 1500 for that to double. This is about the time of the invention of the printing press. Soon it doubled every hundred years, then every fifty, then, in this century, every ten years. Now, at the end of the second millennium, it doubles every seven months, and today?? **We are all on overload, and understandably confused and conflicted.** This **prompts many to move "over and out" into dogmatism, skepticism, or psychic numbness.**

How badly we need **THE BEGINNERS MIND, A FRESH EAR AND HEART, the HOLY SPIRIT.**

DRIFTING: It seems to happen in the middle of the night, when no one is looking. *Do you know many people who have intentionally turned their backs on God and stomped away in anger? Neither do I. Do you know many people who have gradually lost their faith over an extended period of time? So do I. DRIFTING!!*

VISION AND REALITY

60 million abortions since Roe V. Wade- enough babies to populate our four largest cities, N.Y., Chicago, L.A. Dallas. And now we have "Birth-Day" Abortions. We have robbed our nation of enormous human treasure!! I have been present at the birth of all 6 of our children and I **can't imagine killing them the same day!!** Ghoulish, at least!! **There is war on goodness, common sense, life, truth and wisdom.** This Easter, our own personal crosses are greatly overshadowed by the collective sorrows of a very sinful plague.

"Our age constitutes a virtual conspiracy against the interior life." - Jan Walgrove

Everywhere I go I hear people sharing their anger, sadness, frustration, a sense of betrayal and helplessness at the reality of leaders who don't lead, the media and news outlets that don't share the truth or news, the law that is not enforced if you are a celebrity, rich, or politician, in short, our failing, sinful culture. I hear the pain from the people I counsel, the vet who, today, put our dog "to sleep", the arborist who cut down 2 of our trees, from the parents and grandparents who are in line to pick up their grade school children, at the store where I pick up food for my ducks, waiting in the doctor's office, etc.. It doesn't end!! MANY of our leaders have lost their moral center, common sense and their spine. We are in a moral landslide, a rudderless ship, a tsunami of lying and deception. - ALL OF THIS HAS SERIOUS MORAL, SPIRITUAL, RELIGIOUS, AND MAJOR HUMAN, SOCIETAL, SOUL CONSEQUENCES.

Ivan Dragicevic is one of the six visionaries of Medjugorje. He lives six months in Massachusetts, with his wife and children, and six months in Medjugorje, Bosnia Herzegovina. Cindy and I, about four years ago, had the privilege of being present at one of his apparitions. -a great honor! Most touching!!

Ivan, with a mind and heart transformed after 37 years of having the Blessed Mother appear and speak with him, in a radio interview in Italy, spoke the following prophetic words: "Presidents and leaders derive their power from God; but too many of them exploit it for their own interests. **The result is a disordered society. Without God, the world has no future.** That's why the Blessed Mother invites us to come back to God and to re-direct ourselves towards a future with God, so that peace and harmony may be ensured. **A government without God is anarchy. It's a deceptive government.** So it's important for God to be present in the government and in the first position. Since that understanding is absent in many places, peace is unceasingly threatened. **The most terrible war is the one that is being waged in the human heart.** The absence of God has left a void, which gives Satan more space than ever." Ivan asked his listeners to pray that Mary's plan may be fulfilled. Ivan, in the same interview, also said that the **destruction of family and young people** is a true disaster in our age. Check out Medjugorje.com and on YouTube. 55 million people have visited and been touched by Mary at Medjugorje. It will touch you!



On the 2nd of each month, the Blessed Mother appears to Mirjana Soldo, another one of the Medjugorje visionaries. Mary's message to the world on April 2nd seems to fit well here: "Dear children, as a mother who knows her children, I know that you are crying out for my Son. I know that you are crying out for truth, for peace, for that which is pure and not deceptive. That is why I, as a mother, through the love of God, am addressing you and calling you that, by prayer and a pure and open heart within yourselves, you may come to know my Son - His love, His merciful heart. My Son saw beauty in all things. He seeks the good in all souls-even that which is little and hidden-so as to forgive evil. Therefore, my children, apostles of my love, I am calling you to adore Him, to ceaselessly give Him thanks, and to be worthy. Because He has spoken to you divine words, the words of God, the words which are for all and forever. Therefore, my children, live joy, radiance, unity and mutual love. This is what you need in today's world. In this way you will be apostles of my love. In this way you will witness my Son in the right way. Thank you."



SPEAKING SOFTLY

I am a perfectionist. Often I drive myself, and sometimes others, crazy trying to be perfect at this or that. My insecurities say, "If I do this perfectly it, in its perfection, will say back to me, "Aren't you wonderful." And, one more time, my goodness gets **FALSELY REAFFIRMED**. The truth is; If there is any goodness in my action it has been planted in me by God before I perform the action. Cindy, my wife, in her wisdom and insight, often tells me, "Bill you are so perfect, that you are even *perfectly imperfect*". Keeps me humble and in touch with the real truth about myself.

"O God, help me to believe the truth about myself no matter beautiful and imperfect it is."

"If God had a refrigerator, your name would be on it."

In a Navajo rug there is always an imperfection woven into the corner. And interestingly enough, it's where "the Spirit moves in and out of the rug." The pattern is perfect and then there's one part of it that clearly looks like a mistake. The Semitic mind, Eastern mind (which, by the way, Jesus would have been much closer to) understands perfection in precisely that way.

Perfection is not the elimination of imperfection. That's Western, either/or, need-to-control thinking. **Perfection is rather the ability to incorporate imperfection!** There's no other way to live: You either incorporate imperfection, or you fall into depression. That's how the Spirit moves in or out of our lives. Come Holy spirit!

"If one is not loved and caressed, one develops thorns" - Beryl

Mother Teresa was once asked if she wished she had done more, to which she replied, ***"God called me to be faithful, not successful."***

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