

Of Seeds and Flowers

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THE PILGRIM

It was an unusually cold day for the month of May. Spring had arrived and everything was alive with color. But a cold front from the North had brought winter chill back to Indiana. I sat, with two friends, in the picture window of a quaint restaurant just off the corner of the town square. The food and the company were both especially good that day.

As we talked, my attention was drawn outside, across the street. There, walking into town, was a man who appeared to be carrying all his worldly goods on his back. He was carrying, a well-worn sign that read, *"I will work for food."* My heart sank. I brought him to the attention of my friends and noticed that others around us had stopped eating to focus on him. Heads moved in a mixture of sadness and disbelief. We continued with our meal, but his image lingered in my mind. We finished our meal and went our separate ways.

I had errands to do and quickly set out to accomplish them. I glanced toward the town square, looking somewhat halfheartedly for the strange visitor. I was fearful, knowing that seeing him again would call some response. I drove through town and saw nothing of him. I made some purchases at a store and got back in my car. Deep within me, the Spirit of God kept speaking to me: *"Don't go back to the office until you've at least driven once more around the square."* And so, with some hesitancy, I headed back into town.

As I turned the square's third corner, I saw him. He was standing on the steps of the storefront church, going through his sack. I stopped and looked, feeling both compelled to speak to him, yet wanting to drive on. The empty parking space on the corner seemed to be a sign from God: an invitation to park. I pulled in, got out and approached the town's newest visitor.

"Looking for the pastor?" I asked.

"Not really," he replied, *"just resting."*

"Have you eaten today?"

"Oh, I ate something early this morning."

"Would you like to have lunch with me?"

"Do you have some work I could do for you?"

"No work," I replied. *"I commute here to work from the city, but I would like to take you to lunch."*

"Sure," he replied with a smile.

As he began to gather his things. I asked some surface questions. *"Where you headed?"*

"St. Louis."

"Where you from?"

"Oh, all over; mostly Florida."

"How long you been walking?"

"Fourteen years," came the reply. I knew I had met someone unusual. We sat across from each other in the same restaurant I had left earlier. His face was weathered slightly beyond his 38 years. His eyes were dark yet clear, and he spoke with an eloquence and articulation that was startling. He removed his jacket to reveal a bright red T-shirt that said, *"Jesus is The Never-Ending Story."*

Then Daniel's story began to unfold. He had seen rough times early in life. He'd made some wrong choices and reaped the consequences. Fourteen years earlier, while backpacking across the country, he had stopped on the beach in Daytona. He tried to hire on with some men who were putting up a large tent and some equipment. A concert, he thought. He was hired, but the tent would not house a concert



but revival services, and in those services he saw life more clearly. He gave his life over to God. *"Nothing's been the same since,"* he said, *"I felt the Lord telling me to keep walking, and so I did, some 14 years now."*

"Ever think of stopping?" I asked.

"Oh, once in a while, when it seems to get the best of me. But God has given me this calling. I give out Bibles. That's what's in my sack. I work to buy food and Bibles, and I give them out when His Spirit leads."

I sat amazed. My homeless friend was not homeless. He was on a mission and lived this way by choice. The question burned inside for a moment and then I asked: *"What's it like?"*

"What?"

"To walk into a town carrying all your things on your back and to show your sign?"

"Oh, it was humiliating at first. People would stare and make comments. Once someone tossed a piece of half-eaten bread and made a gesture that certainly didn't make me feel welcome. But then it became humbling to realize that God was using me to touch lives and change people's concepts of folks like me."

My concept was changing, too. We finished our dessert and gathered his things. Just outside the door, he turned to me and said, *"Come blessed of my Father and inherit the kingdom I've prepared for you. For when I was hungry you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me drink, a stranger and you took me in."*

I felt as if we were on holy ground. *"Could you use another Bible?"* I asked. He said he preferred a certain translation. It traveled well and was not too heavy. It was also his personal favorite.

"I've read through it 14 times," he said. *"I'm not sure we've got one of those, but let's stop by our church and see."* I was able to find my new friend a Bible that would do well, and he seemed very grateful.

"Where you headed from here?"

"Well, I found this little map on the back of this amusement park coupon."

"Are you hoping to hire on there for a while?"

"No, I just figure I should go there. I figure someone under that star right there needs a Bible, so that's where I'm going next." He smiled, and the

warmth of his spirit radiated the sincerity of his mission.

I drove him back to the town-square where we'd met two hours earlier, and as we drove, it started raining. We parked and unloaded his things. *"Would you sign my autograph book?"* he asked. *"I like to keep messages from folks I meet."*

I wrote in his little book that his commitment to his calling had touched my life. I encouraged him to stay strong. I left him with a verse of scripture from Jeremiah, *"I know the plans I have for you,"* declared the Lord, *"plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a future and hope."*

"Thanks, man," he said. *"I know we just met and we're really just strangers, but I love you."*

"I know," I said, *"I love you, too."*

"The Lord is good."

"Yes, He is. How long has it been since someone hugged you?" I asked.

"A long time," he replied. And so on the busy street corner in the drizzling rain, my new friend and I embraced, and I felt deep inside that I had been changed.

He put his things on his back, smiled his winning smile and said, *"See you in New Jerusalem."*

"I'll be there!" was my reply. He began his journey again. He headed away with his sign dangling from his bedroll. *"When you see something that makes you think of me, will you pray for me?"*

"You bet," I shouted back, *"God bless."*

"God bless." And that was the last I saw of him. Late that evening as I left my office, the wind blew strong. The cold front had settled hard upon the town. I bundled up and hurried to my car. As I sat back and reached for the emergency brake, I saw them, a pair of well-worn brown work gloves neatly laid over the length of the handle. I picked them up and thought of my friend and wondered if his hands would stay warm that night without them. I remembered his words: *"If you see something that makes you think of me, will you pray for me?"*

Today his gloves lie on my desk in my office. They help me to see the world and its people in a new way, and they help me remember those two hours with my unique friend and to pray for his ministry. *"See you in the New Jerusalem,"* he said. Yes, Daniel, I know I will...

If this story touched you, forward it to a friend! *"I shall pass this way but once. Therefore, any good that I can do or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again."*



We are all pilgrims. Remember: In four generations, no one will remember YOUR NAME! **ALL OF OUR EFFORTS, PRAYER AND GOOD WORKS MUST BE DONE WITH UNPRETENTIOUSNESS. Only then can we avoid being deceived by our pride, and our false self. Purity of intention!**

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." Einstein. At Mary's Field we choose the latter! *"Earth is crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God."* Elizabeth Barrett Browning. ***Both love and sin are HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS.***

VISION AND REALITY

On May 4th, my wife, Cindy, Sister Claire, the wonderful first grade teach of all six of our children, Sisters Maureen, Julie and Pat, my daughter, Anne Marie, my daughter-in-law Kelly and my two granddaughters, Hannah and Therese, prepared and hosted a Tea Party for the 30 retired and convalescent nuns from the Sisters of Mercy at St. Mary Home in West Hartford. All the proper tea party food, decorations and love was provided by the above true servants of the Lord. All of the nuns, mostly in wheelchairs, were delighted. A big thank you to Gina and Troy from Gina Marie's Restaurant in Hebron for the scones and cinnamon buns. Delicious!



A SHORT STORY about four people named EVERYBODY, ANYBODY, SOMEBODY AND NOBODY. There was an important job to be done and EVERYBODY was sure that SOMEBODY would do it. ANYBODY could have done it but NOBODY did it. SOMEBODY got angry about that because it was EVERYBODY'S job. EVERYBODY thought ANYBODY could do it, but NOBODY realized that EVERYBODY wouldn't do it. It ended up that EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY when NOBODY did what ANYBODY could have done.

Ralph Martin, on his popular podcast, recently said that the Cardinal in Washington D.C. has a serious responsibility, IF HE LOVES HIM, to speak out against Mr. Biden ***to save his soul.*** Love and HIS POSITION AS BISHOP DEMANDS THIS, and if the bishop doesn't do this, IT IS ON HIM! As a moral theologian, and logically, we ask is it complicity in sin for you and me to keep Mr. Biden from retirement so he will have time to THINK, PRAY AND AMEND HIS LIFE. - HIS SON'S TOO!! For each of us, voting is a serious act of conscience. Father Mike Schmitz of Ascension Press is saying the same thing. The first job of the church is to evangelize. "Go, therefore and make disciples of ALL THE NATIONS." Mt.28. Mr. Biden's soul is at stake.

DO SOMETHING THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE: Visit someone, write an Op-Ed for the paper, pray, forgive, make that phone call, help those who are doing it, text or write that letter, read that book etc. etc..

Parable of the two wolves



One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. All thinking cultures recognize the FALSE SELF inside each of us.

One is EVIL. It is anger, envy, greed, lust, fear, denial, jealousy, regret, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is GOOD. It is joy, peace, love, hope, truth, trust, kindness, generosity, compassion and faith. The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, **"THE ONE YOU FEED."**

SPEAKING SOFTLY

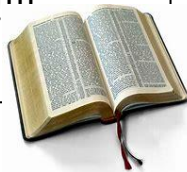
“TOTUS TUUS”, TOTALLY Yours’ was the motto of St. John Paul II. St. Thomas Aquinas would be sent into hours of prayer by simply praying, *“Deus meus at omnia.”* *My God and my all!* Our ego, our pride doesn’t like this, but being totally dependent on God is the correct thing to DO, to BE. *“Apart from Me you can do NOTHING.”* *“No servant is greater than his master.”* *“No messenger outranks the One who sent them.”* *“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.”* *“We have been made for You, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in YOU.”* Augustine. *“Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise you, for what you have hidden from the learned and the clever, You have revealed to the merest CHILDREN.”*

OLDER AND WISER:
The more sand has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it.”



Are you **LEARNED OR CLEVER?** These apparent worldly strengths are **OBSTACLES TO YOUR WHOLENESS, TO YOUR PEACE.** Ph.D.’s, titles, money, success, etc. don’t work here, do they? Wash each other’s feet and *“**Happiness** will be yours if you go and act in like manner.”* John 13. – And how do we learn and get comfortable with this life-giving dependency? **PRAYER AND GRACE ALONE ACHIEVE THE ABILITY TO BE TOTALLY DEPENDENT.** And so, it is free to those who wait on grace and pray!!! We are **ALL** so slow and so broken. Prayer awakens us to the **REALITY** in which we are swimming. **NO PRAYER. NO REALITY.**

Retirement is the time to develop a serious spiritual life. **THE BIBLE!’’**



Since Cindy and I founded Mary’s Field on St. PATRICK’S Day 1982, we have struggled for 42 years not having enough money to pay the Mary’s Field bills. Please, if and only if, you can help us we would be most appreciative. It was especially difficult for Cindy, who for years cared for the books. All donations are tax deductible. Every night, before I go to bed, I pray the hours of Evening and Night Prayer from the Divine Office for everyone who reads “Of Seeds and Flowers”.

Mary’s Field is always doing good things. Please help us to continue with your tax-free donations. Thank you! You have our hugs and prayers always. Pax! Bill and Cindy Please, share this issue of, Of Seeds and Flowers



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