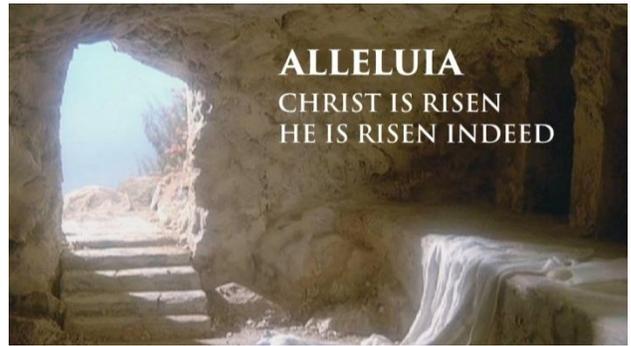


Grace Notes in Miniature

For Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Dear friends:

After talking about Gifts of the Holy Spirit in GNIM yesterday, I was thinking about the many ways in which people are sharing their gifts with the community in unusual ways.



A friend forwarded to me a story about, Lewis Miller, a renowned New York artist in flowers who has done floral arrangements for many famous people. The article talked about how one baby shower for Meghan Markle was a flower arranging class, after which the arrangements



were given to pediatric cancer patients in New York. It went on to describe how, in an effort to give back to the city and share some hope, Mr Miller and his associates went around New York putting flower arrangements on street corners. The arrangements just appeared overnight in trash cans, on statues in Central Park, in many places which have given delight to large numbers of people. You can read and see more at <https://flowerpowerdaily.com/lewis-miller-flower-flash/>

I've heard many stories on a smaller scale of people leaving nosegays in a basket at the end of their driveway for people to help themselves, and a small-town florist who, rather than let all her stock wither and be thrown out, made it into bouquets to give away in her neighbourhood.

I'm also uplifted by the performances of "street music" being given by musicians in apartment complexes, on suburban streets and other places where people can listen and watch from the safety of their own homes and balconies, by art projects that can only be viewed from apartment windows and enjoyed by those stuck above the ground floor in a high-rise. It is truly heartwarming to find out how people can be inspired to share their talents in ways we might not have considered three months ago. For example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7bobc-vRbQ>

To return to the imagery of flowers: there is a great deal of religious imagery in plants in many faith traditions. Old Testament imagery starts with the tree with the fruit of knowledge (was it an apple or a pomegranate?), leads us through bulrushes, fig trees and date palms, cedars of Lebanon, the acacia wood used to build the Tabernacle, cypress, ebony and locust trees, cinnamon, olives and grapes, orchids and crocus; as Christians, we think of palm fronds at Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, of the sower of seeds – probably barley or rye, of mint, mustard

seeds, myrrh and frankincense – both harvested from trees, lilies and anemones, dandelion and thorns, sycamores and mulberries. As we move through Christian history, lilies acquire a strong connection to both the Blessed Virgin Mary and Easter, violets to humility and sanctity. We're told St Patrick used shamrocks to teach the Trinity – many of us may have used clover –, and northern countries use pussy willows in lieu of palm fronds to celebrate Palm Sunday. With the help of old Christmas carols, we associate holly and ivy with eternal life and Christmas, cherry trees with the Holy Family, and Glastonbury thorn bushes with legends of Jesus and Joseph of Arimathea visiting the Tin Isles (Britain). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYaFGSG_x80

Just as all these plants need strong roots to survive, flourish and bear fruit or flower, so our faith is very dependent on the roots that we put down. Baptism is the planting of a seed with the belief that it is being placed in fertile ground. Then, it is essential that it be watered and nourished appropriately and regularly, it may need to be staked occasionally to give it extra support, be pruned, protected from infestations, and sometimes encouraged to grow in a way other than that to which it was leaning. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sl2D6b_PGM

We who share in Catholic education understand that we are assistants to the Master Gardener; that every child entrusted to us starts out as a young plant with potential to bloom and grow. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bL2BCiFkTk>

I was amazed to find this beautiful piece, Baba Yetu (Our Father in Swahili), written and composed as music for the video game Civilization IV by Christopher Tin; we never know how the nurturing we offer will flower; sometimes it does so in the most beautiful ways.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtRSLozhTqQ> The words are in Swahili.

Baba yetu, yetu uliye Mbinguni yetu, yetu amina! Baba yetu yetu uliye M Jina lako e litukuzwe.	Our Father, who art in Heaven. Amen! Our Father, Hallowed be thy name.
Utupe leo chakula chetu Tunachohitaji, utusamehe Makosa yetu, hey! Kama nasi tunavyowasamehe Waliotukosea usitutie Katika majaribu, lakini Utukoe, na yule, muovu e milele!	Give us this day our daily bread, Forgive us of our trespasses, As we forgive others Who trespass against us Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one forever.
Ufalme wako ufike utakalo Lifanyike duniani kama mbinguni. (Amina)	Thy kingdom come, thy will be done On Earth as it is in Heaven. (Amen)

With every blessing,

Gillian