~Grace Place Quiet Garden Experience for June~

~ Interdependence ~

"The act of gardening can teach us something about ourselves, about our interdependence with the world of nature, about the relationships between work and creativity, and about how we might begin to discern those spiritual facts that elude us in other aspects of life. Gardening can also be an expression of community and conversation – another way to say that God is with us on the earth, a way to picture God's presence with us – through the gifts of nature and gardening together."- Edythe Neumann

Opening

~What makes you feel happy, peaceful, or connected to something bigger than yourself?~



~ Highlighting Today's Theme

The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. ~ 1 Corinthians 3:8-9

In an article entitled *Spiritual Gardening*, Theologian Norman Wirzba writes, "Gardening is never simply about gardens. It is work that reveals the meaning and character of humanity, and is an exercise and demonstration of who we take ourselves and creation to be. It is the most direct and practical site where we can learn the art and discipline of being creatures. Here we concretely and practically see how we relate to the natural world, to other creatures, and ultimately to the Creator. We discover whether we are prepared to honor these relations by nurture and care and celebration, or despise and abuse them. Gardens are a microcosm of the universe in which all the living and nonliving elements of life meet, elements ranging from geological formations and countless biochemical reactions to human inventiveness and age-old traditions about cuisine and beauty. When and how we garden gives expression to how we think we fit in the world. Through the many ways we produce and consume food, we bear witness to our ability or failure to gratefully and humbly receive creation as a gift from God."

Professor Wirzba goes on to observe that, "To garden effectively is to bring human living into fairly close, appreciative, and sympathetic alignment with the life going on in the garden. It requires us to know a particular plot of land and understand its potential, and then work harmoniously with it. To garden is to unseat oneself as the center of primary importance, and to instead turn one's life into various forms of service that will strengthen and maintain the many memberships that make up the garden."

Let's pause and reflect for a moment: What does interdependence mean to you? How do you live it out (cultivate/experience)?

Trust, reciprocity, balance, connection, harmony, alignment, wisdom, honoring, spiritual maturity, healthy boundaries, community, forgiveness, play, generosity, Divine presence, values, respect….?

~ Praying with Simple Movements: ~Releasing and Receiving~

Prayer Practice: Palms Down, Palms Up

We pray with our hands up and our hands down. Two motions with our hands that reflect the movement of our heart and Spirit in the presence of God. We seek to pause, be receptive, listen with 'the ear of our heart' and to attend to the invitations and graces offered by the Holy One.

- Begin by becoming still. Gently notice your breathing as you become still.
- Turn your palms down, resting them on your thighs or if standing simply facing downward. Allow yourself to notice what you are carrying today: a concern, an anxiety or something that weighs on your heart and mind. Imagine God being attentive and present to you.
- As you continue with your palms down, let it be a symbolic indication of your desire to turn over this particular concern to God. Inwardly pray and release your concern/burden to God.
- When you feel finished with the palms down part of the prayer, turn your now empty hands upward, as a symbol of your desire to receive from God. Stay in this open posture with a yielded, expectant heart, waiting for whatever God has for you in this moment. With every inhale, receive the fullness of life that comes from God: peace, forgiveness, "enough-ness", direction, healing … whatever God's gift is for you in this moment. You might spend some extra time here simply being open and receptive.

~Quiet Garden Walk: Walking with God

"Gardening, besides being a practical, life-nurturing task, is also always a spiritual activity. In it people attempt to make visible and tasty what is good, beautiful, and even holy."- Norman Wirzba

You are invited to walk around Grace Place Gardens and simply enjoy walking and noticing with God how the garden speaks to you about *interdependence and what it means to you*. What does the garden offer you today?

As you walk through the garden this morning with God, you are invited to hold this question: in what ways am I being invited to embrace or cultivate *interdependence that supports wholeness* in this season?

Begin your garden walk by pausing for a few moments and allow all your senses - your seeing, hearing, feeling, and sense of smell - to be wide open and unobstructed… Notice what you notice… Welcome God's presence.

~When you are ready, begin your walk. ~ Take a few deep breaths before you start.

When something seems to draw your attention, take time to notice and explore. What might God be saying to you here?

~ *Creative Engagement: A Simple Ritual with Grace Place Garden Tea* ~

This Grace Place Garden Tea is storied. Its flavor is affected by a multitude of environmental factors, appreciation, and presence, reminding us of our belonging in the vast interconnected tapestry.

~Choose a cup- hold it for a moment and note its characteristics.

Karakia (Prayer) for Tea by Mark Pierson

As the cup holds the water so we hold your presence, O God.
As the water draws the flavor so your Spirit draws your life through us.
As the tea simply rests to fulfil its purpose may we be at rest as we drink,
And so move closer to being who you made us to be. Amen.

~Take a deep breath. Bring your attention to your physical surroundings. Feel the contact between your feet and the earth. What can you hear? What can you smell?

~Slowly fill it with garden tea.

~Inhale deeply. Appreciate the color and delicious smell of the garden tea.

~Take a small sip. Savor it. What flavors can you detect? Focus on your sensory experience.

~Take another deep breath.

~Contemplate all that went into this tea that you now hold in your hands: the origin of the garden tea, the vision to create Grace Place community garden and maintain it, the roots, soil, sun, rain, the hands that cultivated it, harvested it, the water it is brewed in, the hands that prepared it and so on. Consider the interconnectedness of all these elements. Bless them.

~Reflection and Gratitude: Take a moment to reflect on your experience and express gratitude for the tea, the moment, and the interconnectedness you feel. Thanks be to God.

~Share

- Where have your experiences and reflections lead you today? Take a moment to name them.

~Ending Prayer and Blessing: Creation Care Prayer



God, maker of marvels,
you weave the planet and all its creatures together in kinship;
your unifying love is revealed
in the interdependence of relationships
in the complex world that you have made.
Save us from the illusion that humankind is separate and alone,
and join us in communion with all inhabitants of the universe;
through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,
who topples the dividing walls by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and who lives and reigns with you, for ever and ever. Amen.

- Franciscan Action Network.



"Our aim must be to develop into good gardeners, gardeners who work harmoniously among the flows of life. This means that besides vegetables, flowers, and fruit, gardeners are themselves undergoing a spiritual cultivation into something beautiful and sympathetic and healthy. A caring, faithful, and worshipping humanity is one of the garden's most important crops."- Norman Wirzba

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