

See how the flowers of the field grow Part 4 - Growing

1 Corinthians 3: 6-9 (NIV)

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

One way to reflect on this passage might be to consider that phrase "God's field".

Perhaps we are not growing in isolation but together?

Perhaps we are nothing like as uniform as a wheat field — there is room for diversity, creativity, like a garden, or a field of wild flowers.

Perhaps what God is growing, tending in me is not one thing but many things.

Perhaps God's work in me is dynamic and changing, adapting to circumstances and the choices I make?

What grows in me? What stretches towards the sun?

During our inner summer, we know we are growing. There's a robust surge of spiritual vitality. We long to be faithful to our truest self. The desire to become more healed and whole grows stronger in us. During this time, we often sense the presence of divinity within ourselves and others. Sometimes an immense passion for the holy surges through our spirit. We feel as though we could give our all for deeper communion with the Beloved One, confident of a divine light within us that will never go out.

From Joyce Rupp & Macrina Wiederkehr, *The Circle of Life*, Sorin Books, 2005.

The Godseed in us

As Christians we talk about God as being both immanent (present to us, individually and collectively, in our hearts and in our human experience) and transcendent (utterly beyond our reach or imagination, totally 'other' and without limits).

My Godseed, I believe, is nothing less than the immanent God locked up in my heart, and waiting to be set free in an act of germination, and act of resurrection. How does the germination happen? There are countless ways, and we can never pin God down by trying to define how God will act. One way of visualising this mystery is to notice moments when we seem to be in contact with something, or someone, beyond ourselves... We know, at times like these, that something has happened that is different from the normal run of our daily lives, even though not separated from it. We might say that we feel as if we have been 'touched by God'. It could have happened in all sorts of ways — through a moment of intense communion with nature, or in a human relationship, a moment of deep insight that seemed to come from beyond ourselves, or perhaps a sudden clarity that showed us the way forward in a particular situation.

When these moments happen, we could say that God has not only 'touched' us but has somehow 'taken root' in our lived experience. That touch of Life will, if we allow it to, penetrate down through the layers of our experience until it reaches the centre. There, the transcendent God who 'touched' us will join the immanent God locked up, like a seed in our hearts, and something new will grow from that union. The flower (or plant or bush or tree!) will be the unique manifestation (or incarnation) of God that is ours, and ours alone, to bring forth. If we do not bring it to birth, it will not come to birth. It is the fulfilment of the union of our personal 'gene' with God. It is God's dream for us. It is the inner mystery of ourselves that is already known — has always been known — to God, that he is longing to bring to fulfilment.

From Margaret Silf, *Landmarks*, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998.

The gentle hand of the gardener

To be calm and quiet by yourself is not the same as sleeping. In fact, it means being fully awake and following with close attention every move going on inside of you. It requires the discipline to recognise the urge to get up and go as a temptation to look elsewhere for what is really close at hand. It offers the freedom to stroll through your own inner yard and to rake up the leaves and clear the paths so you can easily find the way to your heart. Perhaps there will be fear and uncertainty when you first come upon this 'unfamiliar terrain', but slowly and surely you will discover an order and a familiarity which deepens your longing to stay at home with yourself.

With this new confidence, we recapture our own lives afresh from within. Along with the new knowledge of our 'inner space' where feelings of love and hatred, tenderness and pain, forgiveness and greed are separated, strengthened, or reformed, there emerges the mastery of the gentle hand. This is the hand of the gardener who carefully makes space for a new plant to grow and who doesn't pull weeds too rashly, but uproots only those which threaten to choke the new life.

From Henri Nouwen, *With Open Hands*, Ave Maria Press, 1972.

To be great, be whole

To be great, be whole: don't exaggerate
Or leave out any part of you.
Be complete in each thing. Put all you are
Into the least of your acts.
So too in each lake, with its lofty life,
The whole moon shines.

Fernando Pessoa

A PAGE TO PONDER

They can be like a sun, words.

They can do for the heart
what light can
for a field.

St John of the Cross*



What might the field of my life look like?
What grows there?

*from Daniel Ladinsky, *Love Poems from God*, Penguin Compass 2022