



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

THE FLAME

July 2021 issue



The Garden of Our Heart

Part 1 Preparing the Soil

By Debbie Rony

I used to hate gardening. Every summer as a child I would spend long hours in our half acre vegetable garden in Virginia working alongside my sister and parents. I only remember a plethora of swarming insects, that it was very, very hot and that I got very, very dirty. However, the reward was great and we always had fresh produce (we also canned some of the vegetables). To this day there isn't a vegetable that I don't love.

Looking back at that experience, I believe I learned a valuable life lesson: It's easy enough to start a project when the thought of the reward is fresh and we are excited about the outcome. The truth is that the effort to plant a garden is far less than the effort to water it, maintain it, keep all the weeds out, and to reap the harvest. We may begin to wonder if all the toiling and sweating is worth it!

Our Christian journey is similar to this analogy. Our initial conversion can be a beautiful and exciting time in our lives. However, unforeseen circumstances, trials, and personal setbacks can soon cause us to neglect our faith. The heat of the day, the bugs, and the weeds start to encroach upon us. It takes hard work, diligence, faith, and some serious weed pulling to reap what we have sown and for Christ to fully bloom in the Garden of our Heart.

I encountered another botanical challenge after living in my house for almost 20 years. I had sorely neglected my front yard and it was a hot mess. The lawn was mostly a mix of dirt and weeds, and the bushes in the flower beds had become overgrown and unsightly. Over the years I

had tried to fix the problems but I finally recognized that I needed a complete overhaul for the front yard! With a firm resolve, I decided to hire a professional landscaper to evaluate the situation and provide me with a written plan to review and implement. The process of this overhaul is a good metaphor for what God does in us when we come to Him in faith and what happens in us when we allow Him to grow us so that we can become more Christlike. We must surrender to the Divine Gardner who knows exactly what we need and how to accomplish it! He gave us his own written plan, "The Bible", and if we follow it, we will soon be growing and blooming into everything He created us to be.

The first thing I had to do to rescue my front lawn was lay down some nutrient -rich top soil. This creates an environment where the newly-planted seed and sod can take root and grow. My soil is naturally hard clay and it had to be tilled up, the rocks had to be removed, and then top soil mixed in and added as the upper layer. This foundational step is extremely important otherwise the sod would not have the conditions necessary to take root and the effort would be completely wasted.

Matthew 13:3-8 says, "And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil but when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.""

We all need to analyze the type of soil that is in our hearts. Have we become hard, shallow, or rocky? In the Bible, the human heart is always referred to as the very center of our being and everything good or bad flows from it. It is the place where God speaks to us and it is where He makes His dwelling place so it is important to know what type of soil you have there.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "The heart is the dwelling place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place, "to which I withdraw." The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and to know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as an image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant." (CCC paragraph 2563)

I encourage you, as a first step of looking into the Garden of our Hearts, to do a personal analysis and ask the Lord to show you the condition of your own heart. Have you been beaten down by life and abused by others? "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." (Psalm 147:3) You could just be disappointed with how your life has turned out and you are full of regret and doubts. "And we know that all things work together for good for those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) Maybe you are dealing with chronic pain and illness that has resulted in hopelessness. "For I know the plans I have for you, 'declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'" The Lord really does have a solution for every condition of your heart and all of these issues are just rocks in your life that Jesus can remove through faith in Him. You first need to do an honest evaluation and ask Jesus to come into your heart to begin to prepare the soil for the work He wants to do in you. If you haven't done this already as part of your faith (or maybe denomination) you can ask Jesus to come into your heart and to be your personal Lord and Savior. I say this because I often encounter people who go to church but do not have a personal relationship with Jesus. I hope that you will now take the necessary step to do this. **He** will be the one to take away every hard piece of clay and rock that has been preventing you from being all He created you to be and to be in a loving relationship with Him. Spend a little time asking Him to prepare your heart for everything He has to give you. "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus

Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it."

(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.)

The Garden of My Heart

Haldor Lillenas, 1919.

Lyrics

***There's a sacred and hallowed retreat,
Where my soul finds a fellowship sweet,
Where the Lord of my life I may meet, In the
garden of my heart.***

***In the cool of the day He walks with me, In
the rose bordered way He talks with me; In
love's holy union, And sacred communion, In
the garden of my heart.***

***There is naught can disturb or molest, There
my spirit finds comfort and rest, And my soul
is no longer distressed, In the garden of my
heart.***

***Shut away from earth's strife and its din, And
protected from soul staining sin, For my
Savior is dwelling within, In the garden of my
heart.***

***There the dove of sweet peace always sings,
And my faith ever trustingly clings; And the
chime of sweet happiness rings In the garden
of my heart.***

Dear Readers,

Returning to regular Mass after the worst of the pandemic has given me so much joy. I also notice such a difference in the reverence shown by everyone and I can feel the quiet presence of the Holy Spirit in a way I had not been attuned to before. I came across some information recently that I wanted to share because I believe it will enable us to participate in the Mass more fully in the power of the Holy Spirit. I think the Lord may be calling us to increase our reverence for the Holy Mass as well as to more fully participate in it with the help of His grace. I encourage you to look over this information about how we can more actively participate in the Mass in the power of the Holy Spirit. Even if you cannot implement all of these suggestions, you may be able to incorporate a few of them. I have taken this list to Mass with me since it is a helpful guide to have on hand. I hope you find this information both relevant and inspiring!

Debbie Rony

Participating in the Mass in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Entrance Song	Pray quietly in tongues before, during and after the song
Sign of the Cross	Expect someone to be delivered from the devil at this time.
Greeting	Slightly extend your hand and pray for the priest.
Penitential Rite	Ask the Spirit to convict you of sin.
Gloria	Pray in tongues again.
Opening Prayer	Make prayer requests as personal as possible.
Responsorial Psalm	Besides the vocal response, silently express the response of your heart in your own words.
Homily	Take notes.
Creed	Focus on one phrase.
Intercessions	Jot down and pray these petitions throughout the day.
Presentation of the Gifts	How does the Lord want you to give yourself to Him today?

Participating in the Mass in the Power of the Holy Spirit continued...

Preface	Recall when you accepted Jesus as Lord and received the Spirit.
Holy, Holy, Holy	See yourself at the throne of God.
Eucharistic Prayer	Put this prayer in your own words.
Consecration	Say and pray the name of Jesus.
Eucharistic Acclamation	Think about Holy Communion.
Great Amen	Pray in tongues again.
Our Father	Look around and choose a person to pray for.
Sign of Peace	Touch someone and expect a healing.
Breaking of Bread	Pray a faith-filled prayer for the multiplication of the effects of this Mass.
Lamb of God	Strike your breast and bow your head.
Holy Communion	Expect a miracle.
After Communion	Listen for a prophecy in the quiet of your heart.
Last Blessing	Bless someone in the congregation.

*****This information provided by Presentation Ministries:**

<https://www.presentationministries.com/series/publications/publication-CelebratingMass-247863>

Upcoming Events

- July 24, 2021** Magnificat, A Ministry to Catholic Women's Mother Mary Morning Star Chapter cordially invites you to a Visitation on July 24, 2021, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church in Apex. Please save the date to join us for fellowship, refreshments, praise and worship led by our Music Ministry, and be inspired by our guest speaker Maria Boylan. Prayer Teams will be available for personal prayer. More information will be coming soon! If you have any questions, please email us at MagnificatClaytonNC@gmail.com. Deadline to register is July 17th. No tickets at door.
- Sept 10, 2021** **Save the Date!** Guest Speaker Maria Vadia
- Oct 2, 2021** **Save the Date!** Divine Mercy Healing Retreat with Fr. Thomas Sunil

****Thank you for your prayers and generosity. We enjoy providing opportunities for prayer, praise and worship as a community. We appreciate donations to continue to make these events possible. To make a donation to the Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Charismatic Renewal please go to:

Raldioc.configio.com/moneyrequest?id=2

***For more information about upcoming events
please visit our website at:
ccsraleigh.weebly.com***