

THANKING GOD for the GIFT of SPRING

The heavens are telling the glory of God
and all creation is shouting for joy.

PRESENCE OF GOD

Remember the words of Jeremiah where God says: "Do I not fill heaven and earth."

You are, O God, in heaven, and You are there in all of its vastness. You are also on the earth, and You penetrate it entirely because it contains You and You yourself contain it.

Wherever we go we will find You there. And that there is no place that is not honored by Your presence

"He is neither absent from east, nor from west, nor from the desert nor from the mountains." (Psalm 74)

God's Spirit has filled the whole world .

All honor and glory to You, O God our Creator, in the name of the Eternal Word, Jesus, our Redeemer, and in the name of the Spirit most Holy Who calls us to life, to holiness and to creativity. Amen.

SPRINGTIME PRAYER—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

For flowers that bloom about our feet,
For tender grass, so fresh, so sweet,
For song of bird, and hum of bee,
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

For blue of stream and blue of sky,
For pleasant shade of branches high,
For fragrant air and cooling breeze,
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

HYMN: HOW GREAT THOU ART

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars; I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art. (2 X)



PSALM 19

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the sky proclaims its builder's craft.
One day to the next conveys that message;
one night to the next imparts that knowledge.
There is no word or sound; no voice is heard;
Yet their report goes forth through all the earth,
their message, to the ends of the world.
God has pitched there a tent for the sun;
it comes forth like a bridegroom from his room,
and like an athlete joyfully runs its course.
From one end of the heavens it comes forth;
its course runs through to the other; nothing escapes its heat.
The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye.
The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.
The statutes of the Lord are true, all of them just.

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 18

The skies tell the story of the glory of God,
the firmament proclaims the work of his hands;
day pours out the news to day,
night passes to night the knowledge.
Not a speech, not a word,
not a voice goes unheard.
Their sound is spread throughout the earth,
their message to all the corners of the world.
At the ends of the earth he has set up
a dwelling place for the sun.
Like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
it rejoices like an athlete at the race to be run.
It appears at the edge of the sky,
runs its course to the sky's furthest edge.
Nothing can hide from its heat.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.

ISAIAH 55:12

You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

MATTHEW 6:25–33

I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life–span?

Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them.

If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?

REFLECTION: REV.RICHARD FEWEKE

When Jesus spoke these words He had, according to the Gospel writer of Matthew, presumably gone up onto a mount in order to speak to the gathering crowds, and to impart the core of His teachings to His closest followers. If it was spring, and the flowers were blooming, all He had to do was gesture with His hand towards the hillside blossoms and they would know first hand of what He spoke. The phrase "lilies of the field" was a kind of generic term for flowers in general. He could well have been referring to the scarlet anemone which He then compared to the royal robes of Solomon. Previously, He had spoken of the birds of the air who "neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns" but are nonetheless provided for out of God's gracious bounty.

What He was trying to say was that human anxiety and concern about physical and material needs, though understandable, is not the key to the true understanding of existence. "Is not life more than food, and the body more than raiment?" God knows we have need of these things and our worry and anxiety about them will not add one hour to our span of life, in fact it may do just the opposite. Moreover, greed and selfishness, which are the cause of most wars and human conflicts, are rooted in an underlying anxiety about material goods. We are afraid that the other guy will have too much of whatever it is we think we need and so we resolve to get ours first and horde the rest for future days. "I've got mine, too bad for you."

Consider the lilies of the field. Jesus could have picked a flower and held it before His disciples as a direct example of what He was trying to say. Instead he used the words as a metaphor for the transitory beauty of nature which is here today and gone tomorrow and compared it to the inner beauty of the human soul in right relation to God and the universe and declared the latter to be of more value, of more value because an enlightened human soul can see into eternity.

The secret of the flower, which Jesus tried to teach, says is that the outward life and beauty which we find in nature and in ourselves is transitory and fleeting, but real nonetheless. We cannot hold onto life and beauty by grasping and clutching it to ourselves, that way leads to endless anxiety and bottomless greed.

We can enjoy life most fully only by letting it go, "kissing the joy as it flies into eternity's sunrise", sharing what we have with others while we have it, knowing

that the only beauty worth having is a soul centered in compassion and lived in awareness of both time and eternity. In times of both grief and gladness, in sympathy and appreciation, we send flowers, because flowers speak of a love and a beauty that is everlasting, though the flowers themselves are fleeting and transitory. Consider the lilies of the field.

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

Response: As the heavens are telling Your glory, O God, and all creation is singing Your praise, hear our humble prayer, O Lord.

That we will see in the beauty of spring, new life, and God's promise to always care for us, we pray...

For all those who bring beauty to our world especially gardeners, florists and growers, we pray:

For all those who raise and grow food for our tables and for those who provide us with clothes, we pray...

That we may take time to appreciate the beauty and wonders of all creation around us and be good stewards of it, we pray...

That we will be able to learn to live life most fully only by letting it go, we pray...

That we may come to understand that the beauty of this world is nothing compared to the beauty of eternal life with the Lord, we pray...

LET US PRAY: O Lord of the flowers and the birds of the air, let us always give praise and honor, joy and thanksgiving to You for all Your gifts. Hear our prayers and answer them as You know best for us. May we always accept Your holy will in our regard. Amen.

BLESSING

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind always be at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.



The heavens are telling the glory of God,
and all creation is singing His praise.
Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field,
and sing, sing the glory of the Lord.



Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to see You Lord in the beauty of creation.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!

**TAKE TIME TO SMELL THE FLOWERS
AND RUN BAREFOOT IN THE GRASS.
CELEBRATE GOD!**