

REFLECT

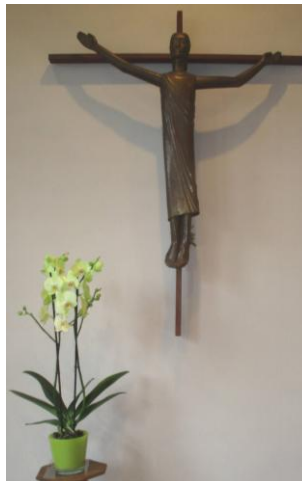


April 2020

Transformation - something old falls apart and something new happens.

We have already begun our Lenten Journey towards Easter with the call to **prayer, fasting and almsgiving**. The three traditional Lenten practices are inviting us to a deeper meaning of contemplative **prayer**: "When you pray, go into your inner room, close the door, and pray to God in secret." (Matthew 6: 6); **fasting** - from our ego-centric desires; and **almsgiving** - solidarity with the poor and vulnerable and work for peace and justice.

The liturgical season of Lent, the ecological season of spring and the General Chapter theme to live a new life rooted in Christ are inviting us to conversion and transformation. Transformation is more than a change of mind. Father Richard Rohr, OFM offers us a process of transformation through letting go. Something old falls apart and something new happens. The process of letting go is like living in the confusing dark space for a while, and allowing oneself to be spit up on a new and unexpected shore. Jonah in the belly of the whale is a perfect



example of letting go. It also indicates Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Colossians urges us to strip off the old self - "anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive language..." and to be clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience..." (Col.3:8, 12).

What are we invited to let go of in order to embrace a new life in Christ?

Pope Francis defines ecological conversion as occurring when "the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us...We come to realize that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults, and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change." (Laudato Si) This is where the cosmic re-birthing of new life takes place.

To live a New Life rooted in Christ requires ongoing conversion of mind, heart and will. I invite us to contemplate the sacred mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The mystery of Jesus' suffering and cross will lead us to total surrender to God's forgiving and transformative love.

Sr. Bimla Minj, OSU

ORATIO IMPERATA

(A prayer in the time of natural calamity, war or any grave public danger to society.)

God our Father
we come to You in our need
to ask Your protection against the 2019
N-coronavirus
that has claimed lives
and has affected many.

We pray for Your grace
for the people tasked with studying the
nature and cause of this virus
and its disease and
of stemming the tide of its transmission.
Guide the hands and minds of medical
experts
that they may minister to the sick
with competence and compassion
and of those governments and private
agencies
that must find cure and solution to this
epidemic.

We pray for those afflicted.
May they be restored to health soon.

Grant us the grace to work for the good
of all and to help those in need.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son
who lives and reigns with You, in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Amen.

Shaping the future, setting a new direction



Enthusiasm is mounting as we prepare for our 9th General Chapter. A General Chapter is a canonically required gathering of members of a

religious institute to discern the direction for the Congregation for the following six years and elect a Congregational Leader and team. Our delegates to the 2020 General Chapter will gather in the name of Jesus Christ, confident that his Spirit will help us to accomplish the work.

Chapter members will hear Province reports, examine our faithfulness to our mission, and look at new initiatives to see where we are being asked to change. In the end the General Chapter will offer specific directives for the whole Congregation, proposing a path to help us live more fully the Life of Christ.

Important decisions that emerge through prayer, discussion, and study will shape the future and set a new direction for our Congregation.

New Life Rooted in Christ is the theme for the meeting to be held in Rome October 7-21, 2020.

Our delegates to the Chapter will have the opportunity to work with their Sisters from across the globe, across ministries, across generations, and across cultures as they will come together under one roof at the Generalate of the Ursulines of the Roman Union. What a

blessing for our growing Congregation and for the Church we serve.

To prepare for the Chapter, we are all asked to review our way of life, apostolates, and the various works currently undertaken.

The Gift of Years

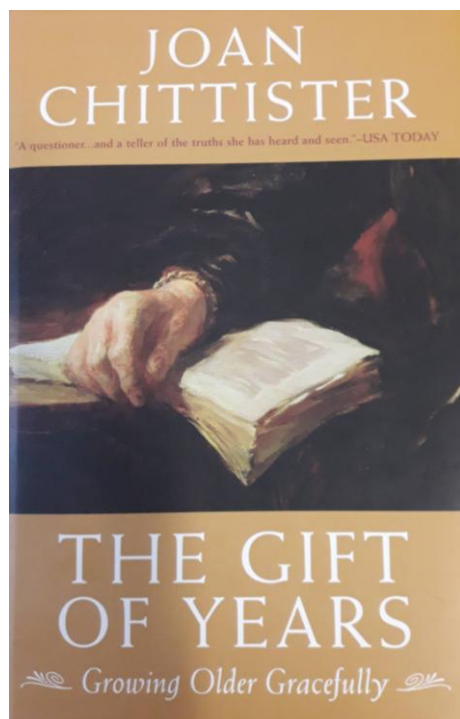
Have you ever picked up a book, and discovered the author is talking directly to you?

This happened to me as I reread *The Gift of Years Growing Old Gracefully* by Joan Chittister. The God filled wisdom she offers me in the book is like having a good friend standing by my side reminding me,

You still have time to get ready for "The Twilight Time."

Her essays are direct, succinct and have enticing titles: Adjustment, Productivity, Legacy. As I read the pages, I thought of the 2020 General Chapter. I asked myself what is a take-away I can get about new life, about rootedness and about God from this book?

To begin with I heard enjoy life, embrace life in its fullest, reflect on my past life. These ideas permeate each essay. Take the next step to begin something new don't stop in your tracks with years ahead of you. For example in the essay



entitled Solitude she says, "As older women members we have an obligation now to live well with the people around us who are making this new life possible. We owe them the best we have."

The book is not just for people in the later years. For all ages, life is what we ourselves make happen. We can move beyond what we've always done and drop

what is outmoded. These are questions for the 2020 General Chapter to address. Are there new directions that we are being called to fulfill our mission to make known and loved in today's world?

What are the big issues crying for our attention: care for creation, protection of the most neglected in society, reaching out to newcomers to our countries who need education, etc.?

We can draw a lesson from a theme running through the book - stay alert to what is happening engage with it, talk about it, and when faced with

options we can choose what brings new life and energy or resist the change.

Once as a young sister in full habit, I was on a train in Connecticut. A gentleman started a conversation. His opening remark was, "I see you are a young woman of religious conviction." Then he asked me how I had come to this decision so young?

I'm not in full habit now, and probably a gentleman on the tram would offer me his seat, rather than comment on my youth. With age, my religious commitment hasn't basically changed. It is in my heart, directing my decisions, my thinking and my choices.

I haven't fully appreciated the gift of years, but I hope I'm growing old gracefully. By meditating on the theme rooted in Christ, my creative imagination helps me visualize fresh roots spreading out into new fields. I am convinced that together we can move beyond what may be outmoded and embrace new life rooted in Christ. We will know it is right when we feel the excitement of the Holy Spirit moving in the group.

Think of all we can gain from new initiatives as Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk!

I highly recommend the book, *The Gift of years Growing Old Gracefully* by Joan Chittister.

Sr. Jane Quinlan, OSU

A happy, cheerful and satisfied life

What helps me live a joy filled life?

Life is precious; a free gift given by God through our parents.

Live life fully - "God's glory is man fully alive"

Live life graciously - as you live so you die.
Be loving and lovable for God loves the cheerful giver.

Be fully aware of God's constant presence everywhere in everything, in all circumstances.

I am God's temple - The Triune God dwells in me.

He takes delight in me.

I am delighted in His Presence.

There is no room for sadness.

In prayer, talk to Jesus as a person.

Deep awareness of His presence

Deep intimacy with Him

Alone with Jesus - the meeting of two persons,
both enjoying the meeting.

Religious life is to witness joy, love and peace.

Seeking only the glory of God and His kingdom.

Sr. Electa Kindo, OSU