

January 27, 2025

Daily Reflections



WRAPPED IN THE ORDINARY

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

"I wouldn't recommend using a tree for a spiritual guide all the days of one's life, but that sycamore got me through a long stretch of barrenness. It was only a little tree, and I didn't know it was holy until I spent time with it. Truly, holiness comes wrapped in the ordinary."

MACRINA WIEDERKEHR, "A TREE FULL OF ANGELS"

Reflection

Past reflections have introduced you to "Art" the artichoke. Art is actually pretty amazing, having lived well beyond the life expectancy of most artichoke plants. Art was moved and transplanted over twenty years ago, and has provided a crop every year. This year was tough for Art, with the unprecedented heat last summer, and then, our gardener and I uncovered a break in the sprinkler line which left Art without water for who knows how

long. The good news: the discovery was made during the dormant period, and so Art had been cut back to lay fallow. Yet, I wondered if Art was going to make it, looking more lifeless than in the past.

During late autumn, I started to visit Art more regularly to check in on how things were going. The stump that was Art looked “deader than a doornail.” Beginning to worry and wonder if Art needed a proper burial, I asked the gardener to check the plant’s vitals -- all was well, it was just a matter of waiting and hoping. One day about a week ago, while visiting Art, I noticed green sprouts breaking through.

All of this invited me to reflect on the gift of hope. This example of a seemingly trivial event might give pause in the midst of all that is going on in the world. Yet, sparks of hope can brighten the broad course of life experience. Some things to consider -- do you view the world around you and circumstances from a posture of hope? Recognizing that our attitudes are conditioned by multiple factors -- personality, family origin, life challenges and losses as well as gifts -- do you tend toward hope or cynicism? For me, it depends.

Serendipitously, with all of these contemplative machinations, during the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass broadcast from the Vatican, Pope Francis heralded the Jubilee Celebration, Pilgrims of Hope and the Holy Year 2025. What an exciting moment in our time and church. February 2022, Pope Francis announced the Jubilee: “We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainly by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and foresighted vision.” With a pilgrim’s heart, the journey begins.



Art the Artichoke
Photo by Julie Mussché

For Pondering

- In addition to the considerations already offered, how do you define the virtue of hope?

- How has hope sustained and inspired you?
 - Where in your life do you seek hope?
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For Prayer

The Jubilee Prayer

*Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.*

*May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.*

*May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.*

*May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.*

*To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.*

Amen.

POPE FRANCIS

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