***(IV) Seeing Our Lives as Parables***

*All the Moments*

*The believer is essentially one who remembers.*

*Pope Francis*

**Grateful for the Unobtrusive Good**

Mary, whatever’s small and unnoticed

is like you . . . growing,

the greenest twig stirring in the rainy gusts

that were all those questions asked by those who

lived before your time and spent their lives

looking for God’s Son to come.

The sunshine warmed you,

and when the time was ripe, you blossomed,

smelling like balsam, and the fragrance

of your Bloom renewed the spices’ dry perfume.

The earth rejoiced when your body great spelt.

The sky celebrated by giving the grass dew,

and the birds built nests in your wheat,

and the food of the Eucharist was made

for all humanity.

We feast on it, full of joy.

Kind Lady, no wonder you are always happy.

Eve scorned these things, but we

praise our God on high!

St. Hildegard of Bingen

She was much perplexed by his words and *pondered*\* what sort of greeting this might be.

Luke 1:29

*\*sumballo:* to throw together, to bring together, to bring together in one’s mind

**or** *paraballo*: Greek: to place one thing beside another,

to juxtapose

*At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought. C.H. Dodd*

The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.

Mark 4:26-29

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Don’t be afraid to jump ahead. Make the subject of the next sentence different from the subject you just put down. It is impossible to write meaningless sequences. In a sense the next thing always belongs. In the world of imagination, all things belong. If you take that on faith, you may be foolish, but foolish like a trout.

Richard Hugo

*He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:17*

*. . . a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things*

*on earth. Ephesians 1:10*

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*from Augustine’s Confessions*

Now there was a garden attached to our lodging . . . [and] to this garden the tumult of my heart had driven me. . . . I flung myself down somewhere under a fig tree and gave free rein to my tears. . . .

Suddenly a voice reaches my ears from a nearby house. It is the voice of a boy or a girl (I don’t know which) and in a kind of singsong the words are constantly repeated: “Take it and read it. Take it and read it.” At once my face changed, and I began to think carefully of whether the singing of words like these came into any kind of game which children play, and I could not remember that I had ever heard anything like it before. I checked the force of my tears and rose to my feet, being quite certain *that I must interpret this as a divine command to me* to open the book and read the first passage which I should come upon. . . .

I wanted to be just as certain about things which I could not see as I was certain that seven and three make ten . . . .

From now on, however, I began to prefer the Catholic faith. In requiring belief in what was not demonstrated . . . I felt that the Catholic faith showed more modesty and more honesty than did [the others], who made rash promises of certain knowledge.

So I was both confounded and converted . . .

I no longer desired to be more certain of you, only to stand more firmly in you.

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A lifetime of writing is a slow, accumulative way of accepting one’s life as valid. When you write you are momentarily telling the world and yourself that neither of you need any reason to be but the one you had all along.

Richard Hugo

**God Says Yes To Me**

I asked God if it was okay to be melodramatic

and she said yes

I asked her if it was okay to be short

and she said it sure is

I asked her if I could wear nail polish

or not wear nail polish

and she said honey

she calls me that sometimes

she said you can do just exactly

what you want to

Thanks God I said

And is it even okay if I don’t paragraph

my letters

Sweetcakes God said

who knows where she picked that up

what I’m telling you is

Yes Yes Yes

Kaylin Haught

*Almost everybody interposes a massive and complicated series of editings between the time words start to be born into consciousness and when they finally come off the end of the pencil onto the page. This is partly because schooling makes us obsessed with the “mistakes” we make in writing. But it’s not just “mistakes” or “bad writing” we edit as we write. We also edit unacceptable thoughts and feelings.*

*Editing in itself is not the problem. The problem is that editing goes on at the same time as producing. The editor is constantly looking over the shoulder of the producer and fiddling with what he’s doing while in the middle of trying to do it. No wonder the producer gets nervous, jumpy, inhibited.*

*And this habit of compulsive, premature editing doesn’t just make writing hard. It also makes writing dead. Your voice is damped out by all the interruptions, changes, and hesitations between the consciousness and the page. In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, a texture, a rhythm--a voice--which is the main source of power in your writing. Maybe you don’t like your voice, but it’s the only voice you’ve got. You better get back into it.*

*Peter Elbow,* ***Writing Without Teachers***

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*Maybe whatever seems*

*to be so, we should speak so from our souls,*

*never afraid, “Light” when it comes,*

*“Dark” when it goes away.*

*William Stafford*

*I am troubled, uncertain.*

*Peaceful, happy.* a text from a parishioner

*Maybe it’s OK to be a mess.* from a journal entry by a parishioner

**A Summer Day**

A ukulele band strums by the grave

of an old woman I never knew.

I lead the prayers, alb flapping,

helping to lay the body to rest,

and as the family lingers,

quietly walk away, down the hill

to another grave I remember from before.

It was winter then, and the oak was bare,

and the one we buried was a boy.

*I keep thinking he’ll be cold*,

the father said. *He’ll need his coat.*

But it’s summer now, and the farmers

are haying in their yellow fields.

The dust of the harvest is softening the air.

And as I stand at the marker, looking out,

a feeling starts to come over me,

a kind of peace, almost like the peace

I prayed for up the hill, *the peace of God,*

*which surpasses all understanding*.

It spreads through my body like warmth.

I know. I’m just saying what happened.

I’m just saying that it surprised me, too.

The farmers, and the yellow fields,

and the warm, summer wind.

The ukulele band, strumming still.

Chris Anderson

Sparrowhawk reached out and took his hand in a hard grasp, so that both by eye and by flesh they touched. He said Arren’s true name, which he had never spoken, “Lebannen.” Again he said it: “Lebannen, this is. And thou art. There is no safety, and there is no end. The word must be heard in silence; there must be darkness to see the stars. The dance is always danced above the hollow place, above the terrible abyss.

Ursula Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore*

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*Nights and days bless the Lord!*

*Light and darkness bless the Lord!*

*Daniel 3:71-72*

*Accept everything and let him act.*

*Jean-Pierre de Caussade*

***Wild Geese***

*You do not have to be good.*

*You do not have to walk on your knees*

*for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.*

*You only have to let the soft animal of your body*

*love what it loves.*

*Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.*

*Meanwhile the world goes on.*

*Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain*

*are moving across the landscapes,*

*over the prairies and the deep trees,*

*the mountains and the rivers.*

*Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,*

*are heading home again.*

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,*

*the world offers itself to your imagination,*

*calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—*

*over and over announcing your place*

*in the family of things.*

*Mary Oliver*