

July 11, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

Image by Christine Sponchia from Pixabay

HARVEST AWAITS US

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

An Excerpt From Today's Gospel

At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so, ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

MATTHEW 9:36-38

Reflection

Today's Gospel message is clear; we who consider ourselves disciples of Jesus are called into his fields of service. The picture I've chosen is symbolic in that the few dark stalks amidst this field of golden splendor represent the few laborers. I like to ponder the fields of soybeans, corn, and wheat in the part of Ohio where I found myself this day. Watching the farmers plant, nurture, and

eventually harvest their crops is rich in scriptural symbolism if I allow my prayer to move in this direction.

The harvest to which Jesus speaks is the great need among people. These needs range from those with illness and injury to the spiritual needs of those who have lost their way and are looking for God in their lives. The corporal works of mercy speak loudly to us, calling for laborers in the fields of poverty, prejudices of all kinds, hunger, violence, and all social ills that are a part of daily lives for millions and millions of people around the world. It is a clear call to each of us; how are we responding? Are we a part of the laborers in the fields of the Lord -- or are we missing from this picture?



Grain field in Sidney, OH
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Harvest Pondering

O fields of golden splendor, your gentle presence in the country-sides of life speak to each of our senses. Your changing colors throughout the seasons call to mind our own transformation in the Lord in our ever-changing lives.

I wonder, as I gaze upon my own being, what parts of me need nurturing as I turn to the God who has planted me? Perhaps the Master Gardener of all creation is gently asking each of us to bloom in new fields - fields that need our particular flower and presence.

Guide us, O Divine Creator, as we seek out the vast fields in need of harvesting. May our faith be put into action as we labor in fields left untended by indifference and overgrown with violence, poverty, and injustices of all kinds.

May we plant seeds of gentleness, kindness, compassion, and hope. May we bring sunshine, water, and nutrients to the rocky soil of the lives of those doubting their faith. Let us wade into the fields of humanity, using our God-given gifts and talents, abundantly and generously.

For Pondering

- Where are the fields of your own labor? With whom? Might you hear the distant sound calling you to another field in need of harvesting?
- Recall the fields of your own life where you were the harvester. What can you glean from your labors? How were you transformed by those with whom you served?

For Prayer

*O God of the harvest
may our service in your fields yield hope, love, compassion, and joy.
We pray for the grace to recognize the people and places
that need our tender, loving care.
Let us call upon all the grace you bestow on us each day
to give us strength to tend the harvests of life.
Amen.*

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