

Spiritual Reflections for the Summer of 2025

Please choose a reflection and meditation

2025 Jubilee of Hope

It has been a tumultuous year in our Church, and we are only halfway through. We are in celebrating the Jubilee of Hope and at the same time mourning the loss of Pope Francis. We can look to the surprise election of an American, Augustinian bishop as our new Pope, Leo XIV, and know that the Holy Spirit is active in the Church and in the world. Yet, there is no denying our deep anxiety with regard to many current realities - misleading social media, environmental degradation, Canada under threat, and no end in sight to wars in Ukraine and the Middle East to name but a few.

The scripture readings for the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist speak to the turmoil of these emotions: Despair *"I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength,"* [Isaiah 49:4], and Hope that God is at work so that his *'salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'* [Isaiah 49:6]. As suggested by Sam Sawyer SJ. 'Between those two poles, between the fruitlessness of relying solely on our own efforts and the faith that God's justice and mercy will be vindicated, is where we must find the courage to cooperate with grace,'¹

The joy and support that Mary and Elizabeth share in the Gospel of Luke is such an opening, [Luke 1: 57-80]. Mary helps Elizabeth and Zechariah see more clearly. They can rejoice in Elizabeth's pregnancy and celebrate the hand of God in their lives. Mary in turn, is welcomed in by her cousin during a tumultuous time in her own life. In this safe and accepting home she can let loose, exuberantly dancing and singing praising God and his new works.

'May we likewise be blessed, even in moments of anxiety and exhaustion, with encounters that strengthen our hope and trust in God, and lead us to the freedom, like John the Baptist, to announce the coming kingdom of God.'¹

¹Sawyer, Sam SJ. Reflection on Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. America Media, 24.06.25

Reflection Question:

1. Have you experienced encounters that lift your spirits and sustain your hope or found that your presence has helped lift another person from despair?

On behalf on the GTCC Spirituality Committee, I wish you a slow and peaceful summer season with a lighter home visit volume and time to enjoy family and the beauty of God's creation.

Sr. Yvonne Gray, Chair Spirituality Committee & St Anselm's Conference

Spiritual Reading: The Gifts We Bring

Writing to his spouse Amélie from Paris in August 1842, Frédéric Ozanam described the sad conditions of a poor family whom he knew. He then suggested to Amélie that he re-direct his birthday gift for her, to this family. What exactly was the gift or its value, is unclear; but Ozanam wanted to give something of value to his neighbours in need. As he puts it,

“[A]llow me before departing from them to give them something for your birthday. I shall take the gift, already quite modest, that I am sending you, and give it in order that on this day [your birthday], the 15th of August, these eight little creatures, whom the Good Lord loves . . . , might pray . . . for us. . . .”¹

Question: Thinking broadly, what might be some *gifts* that you could bring to a Neighbour

Submitted by Bro. Alex Damm, St. Jerome's Conference, Peel North Particular Council

¹ FO 430 (Paris, 6-7 August 1842), in *Correspondance Frédéric Ozanam et Amélie Soulacroix : Poèmes, Prières et Notes Intimes*, ed. Léonard de Corbiac, with Magdeleine Houssay (Paris : Desclée de Brouwer, 2018), 431.