

How Does – Or Will My Garden Grow?

Every year I promise myself that I'm going to plant a vegetable garden. I imagine the succulent tomatoes fresh from the vine, crispy peppers and cucumbers, green beans that snap when I pick them and corn fresh from the field. Somehow the planting season passes and it never gets done. Maybe it's the memory of how the deer and bunnies made a feast of my garden years ago. More likely the real reason is that I don't want to put in the hard work of weeding, watering, tending that gardening requires. I want the produce but not the work.

To be honest, I'm not a fan of waiting or of process. I want results NOW. I'm the "are we there yet?" person on a long car trip. As long as I can remember my focus has been on getting to the final product when doing any project. Years ago when I had young children, I decided to make a pair of slacks. I was in a hurry to get things done so I reinforced the seams so they would hold up against any attempt to rip them apart. Oops! What a mistake. I discovered I had made a long skirt instead of a pair of slacks. That was the end of my sewing career. The sewing machine is now used as a table. When someone does make me slow down as did the knitting teacher who kept having me start over I ended up making one fine pot holder while everyone else made hats and scarves. With such a dismal result you can be sure I didn't take knitting 2.

Despite myself, though, I have learned (often kicking and screaming) that time and process can produce amazing results. In cradling and nursing my babies and being with my husband as he was dying. I discovered that I could be patient and be faithful in very difficult circumstances, that the plans I had had for myself weren't really the best for me and the results of going through the process of things I

wouldn't have chosen brought me to where I am today. I'm in the right place. Rushing would never have gotten me here.

A recent retreat I took part in spoke of the process of letting God love and reveal our sacredness to us even when we fight it. God works around and blesses us even through our resistance. As we allow God in, we become aware of who we really are, live more gracefully with what comes of our lives and learn to trust. Grace doesn't remove humanity but embraces it. As we realize this we become more grateful and are led to generosity. We want to give away what we have received.



Maybe a garden could be a reminder of the holiness of growth. Like the grain of wheat, the seed needs good soil to break open and grow. And there's a long time (or at least it seems so to impatient me) before any signs of life. But, oh the joy of the first buds, the promise of a bountiful harvest! The weeding, watering, and tending become less tedious. That first tomato is going to taste even sweeter because of what has gone into it.

Maybe gardening could even be prayer—a reminder of what God is doing often unseen in each one of us.

So bring out the hoes and the seed starters. It's time to get my hands dirty. This year there WILL be a garden—and I might even share my tomatoes!

—Angela Anno, Pastoral Associate