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'See how the lilies of the field grow.' Matthew 6:28 NIV

**Today I start a new three week series on flowers**, and their significance to our faith, because, flowers, as part of nature, as a language, as a reminder of beauty, are indeed significant to our faith.

**Last week we talked about gardens**, and the part they play in the Bible, from the Garden of Eden, to the Garden of Gethsemane... and here in Milford, that is the theme of the center panel of our stained glass windows; Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, shortly before his arrest.

**We talked last week about God's original intention** that mankind be gardeners, living their lives on the land, as stewards not owners, of God's Creation.

**We also talked about the connection between God and man** through nature, how important it is that we spend time appreciating this beautiful world, and how nature can help ground us, or root us, in a deep relationship with our God.

**Today we are going one step further...** three very good reasons why we should pay more attention to flowers.

**First of all, flowers are a language...** they communicate our feelings. We tell people our feelings with words, we express our feelings in music, and we also reach out to one another when we give flowers.

In Victorian England, the choice of flower a young suitor presented to the object of his affection, was significant.

Red roses of course, we still know to be 'I love you' Yellow rose, signified  
'friendship'. Begonia. Beware. Why on earth you would

want to present this to a potential girlfriend is a mystery!

Yellow Carnation. You have disappointed me. Relationship going through difficulties.

Cyclamen Goodbye.

Dandelion Faithfulness.

Gloxinia. Love at first sight.

Flowers are a language. No words are spoken, but a message is sent, nonetheless.

Think of the significant moments in your life, and the part flowers played in it.

**On the birth of a baby....** Congratulations. Good luck! We love you. We wish you well.

## **Mothers Day. I love you, Mum**

**Weddings**..... flower girl with her petals, bridesmaids with their bouquets, the groomsmen, the groom and the parents all with their corsages.....and then the bride with the biggest bouquet of all. **Throwing the bouquet**.... Next person to be married.

How about flowers for Prom night. Flowers for Grad. Flowers for Valentines Day. Flowers for anniversaries. Flowers for housewarmings, and homecomings.

**All important moments in our lives. Bookmarks of the passage of time.**

**Tea Party video clip. Happiness. Community. Love.**

Then there are the floral displays associated with loss.

Funerals. I love you. I miss you.  
wreaths..unending love.  
you.

Floral  
Fresh flowers on a grave. I miss

My fathers' favorite flower... sunflower..... church was filled with sunflowers when we gathered for his funeral service.

**Recently showed a video clip called the Florist.** I'm just a florist, and then you saw her delivering flowers to a Senior, to a new mother, and the joy they brought.

**Flowers are beautiful. They are God's eye candy.** Imagine living in a black and white world. Imagine living in a large city. No flowers. Lots of concrete. **I saw a TV show** about a young student who went round planting individual flowers in the cracks on a sidewalk, and then filming people's reactions to seeing it there. Literally falling over themselves to avoid treading on it.

**Every small detail in life matters. Every single flower.** Every single tear we shed. Each and every minute detail of our daily lives is witnessed by our God, who actively chooses to cherish each one of us.

**Flowers remind us that God is meticulous in all He does.**

Ever heard the expression beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Sometimes its difficult to imagine some objects being beautiful. Luis. Loves concrete. To him it is beautiful. It's set aside. It's special.

**Flowers have that same capacity,** with their colors, their designs, their scope. From the humble daisy to the most exotic orchid each flower is unique in its formation and representation, and beauty to me, is directly linked to my faith. **I see a beautiful object,** and I thank God for it. I often compare manmade objects to Godmade ones.... Sure they are useful, but are they beautiful? Do they reflect God's artistic hand in Creation? Concrete. Sorry Luis. Plastic. Polyester.

**Now think of a field of lavender** in Provence, a field of tulips in the Netherlands, or maybe your display of annuals this year in your backyard. **Flowers lift us up, and encourage us to marvel at how they are made, how beautiful they are.**

**Which brings me to the lilies in the field** that Jesus pointed out to his disciples. **Don't worry, he said to them. Don't be anxious.** Your Father in heaven is going to look after you. If he looks after flowers and lavishes so much attention on them, how much more is he going to protect and love his children. Flowers bloom, and they fade. But you, you will always have hope. Always have a future.

**Which brings me to my last point, connectivity.** Flowers remind us that our faith grows when we feel connected with God. We are told in Scripture to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind..... well our soul is what responds to beauty, our soul is what responds to the eternal nature of our relationship with God. **Flowers have a short life, but we are destined for an eternity.**

William Blake, English Poet ‘To see a world  
in a grain of sand  
And a heaven in wild flower.  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.’

**Flowers are our signposts to heaven.** They remind us  
that beauty will survive ugliness. That vivid colors bring us to life,  
excite us. That a small flower planted in the concrete jungle  
of a city can bring happiness, and awareness to all who see it.

**Our souls, our innermost being respond to flowers,** Seemingly fragile  
flowers can outlast a rainstorm. Art will transcend matter.  
There is no need for long complicated scientific treatises to tell us what we already know, that with flowers, we are given the opportunity to see God at work.

When people moved off the land and into cities, they lost that connection with nature. We need to re-connect, in order to thrive. So remember, flowers are a language.

Flowers bring Beauty Flowers connect us  
to God.

Jesus used them to remind his disciples that we need to pay more attention to what is already around us. **We don't need more things in life. We need less, so that we can appreciate more....**

This morning, as we celebrate communion together, imagine you are in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus, and let us listen together to what Luke's Gospel has to say....

Luke 22:41 Jesus withdrew about a stone's throw beyond the disciples, knelt down and prayed. 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.'

If you look carefully in the stained glass window, you can see those disciples in the background, sleeping. And traditionally, where those drops of blood fell to the ground, grew lilies...

**You see we are encouraged not to worry, not to be anxious, but to put our trust and hope in Jesus Christ. He suffered on our behalf to redress the balance between man and God. He suffered, and lilies grew.**

When we take communion, thank God for his grace.  
grace. His unconditional love, that was bought at a price.

His amazing

And let flowers remind us that our God is not only a God of grace, but also a God of beauty, a God who wants a relationship. The next time you give flowers, give them with the knowledge that those flowers are a means to express words that we find difficult to say. And they are signposts, reminding us that we have an eternal future.

**Let us pray:**

Heavenly Father. The world in which we live is breathtakingly beautiful. We take so much for granted. Sunrises, sunsets. Hot summer days and cool evenings. Each day is a gift. Let us live it well, mindful always of You. In Jesus' name. Amen.