



# Sunflower Seeds

Celebrating Everyday Spirituality



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## “God’s not Finished with Me Yet”

by MELANNIE SVOBODA SND on JULY 15, 2019.

I like Brandon Heath’s song, “God’s not Finished with Me Yet”–also known as “Wait and See.” It is a reminder that God is still at work in my life.

I know, in one way we can use those words as an excuse for our faults and shortcomings. We can say, “I know I was crabby... I know I was unkind... I know I was mean...but God is not finished with me yet. I’m not perfect. So just put up with me the way I am.”

But I think the words can have deeper and wider implications. God is not finished with ME yet. God is not finished with US yet. God is not finished with THE WORLD yet. God is still actively involved in our lives and in our world. God is still creating, is still at work–with us–bringing about that better world we are longing for.



Yet, sometimes we act as if God were finished working. We live as if Divine Revelation ended with the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. The Catholic Church formally teaches that Divine Revelation ended with the death of St. John, the last apostle. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: “no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But the Catechism adds, “Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith to grasp its full significance over the course of centuries.”

## About Sister Melannie Svoboda, SND

Sister of Notre Dame,  
teacher, student, author,  
speaker, listener, friend,  
poet, farm girl.



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## About Sunflower Seeds

Each Monday I’ll post a short reflection, a simple musing on some aspect of spirituality– the everyday kind of spirituality that includes things like walking in the park, slicing an onion for the casserole, caring for a child, studying for an exam, reading a line from scripture, laughing at a joke, or mourning a significant loss.



Along the way I welcome your questions, comments and insights too. After all, we’re all in this life–this spiritual life–together!

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But I like what Barbara Brown Taylor says about God not being finished with us yet. She is an Episcopal priest and one of my favorite writers:

*God is not through with us yet. At our worst moments, both individually and corporately, we act as if that were so. We act as if creation had all been finished a long, long time ago and encased in glass, where we may look at it through the grime*



*of the centuries but may not touch. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Holy Spirit still moves over the face of the waters, God still breathes life into piles of dust, Jesus still shouts us from our tombs. The deep river of revelation still runs strong from the fresh headwaters of its source to its jewel-encrusted banks*

*in the heavenly city, with power to drench our days along the way. (The Preaching Life, p. 53)*

Brown's slant on this topic increases our personal responsibility to stay connected with God—consciously—especially through our personal prayer, our pondering of the scriptures, our reflection on our personal life, our appreciation of creation, and awareness of the needs of others in the world. The fact that divine revelation continues, means I must be open to new insights or to new applications of “old” insights. It means I must try to partner with God—using my specific gifts and my unique personality—to respond to the current local, national, and world situation in order to help bring about a world of peace, justice, and love.

*What are some of the ways you consciously stay connected with God?*

*Name one specific gift you have that you are using to partner with God to “bring about a better world.”*

*Be on the lookout today for signs of the Holy Spirit moving over the waters, God breathing “piles of dust” into life, and Jesus shouting someone from their tomb.*

**PS:** A big “Thank you” for your prayers for our SND gathering last week in Columbus! It was an important step in choosing our new leadership and becoming one USA province in 2020. And please remember in your prayers the weekend retreat I will be leading in Syracuse, NY July 19-21 at Christ the King Retreat Center. I really appreciate your prayerful support in these endeavors!

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Our song today is Brandon Heath's "He's not Finished with Me Yet," also known as "Wait and See."



What are some of your thoughts on this reflection? Please respond below!

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**Thomas DeFreitas** July 15, 2019 at 4:14 am



Sr. Melannie, happy Monday!

I was more charmed than I can say by Brandon Heath's song! Any song that begins with the rhyme "Tennessee" and "humidity" captures my heart at once!

The theme of your post today reminds me of a notion put forward by the Irish Dominican, Fr Gabriel Harty, in his approach to the Rosary. He says that unless somehow we can make the mysteries our own – connect them with our own agonies, annunciations, exultations – the rosary-prayer will remain inert and musty. Here's a quotation from one of his books:

“Mary was our representative on the first day of Annunciation. I say ‘first’ day because annunciation is an ongoing reality. Divine favour and rejoicing is a flood of mighty waters flowing from the bosom of the Trinity and we are all caught up in it. The key that opens the floodgates for us is surely the same angelic salutation as at the Annunciation to Mary.”

As for “bringing about a better world,” one of the most probing questions in Give Us This Day's examen for night prayer is: “Whom did I help or encourage [today]?” I ask myself this question nightly, and am often discomfited to strain for an answer. But sometimes, happily, I do recall something, or a handful of things.

Staying connected with God, for me, means spiritual reading, the beads, Mass, and twenty minutes of silent prayer (“chair prayer” or, if I do it while lying down, “bed med”!). And of course, alertness to the world outside and all around.

Thank you for Mr. Heath's wonderfully good-humoured song, for Rev. Brown Taylor's wise and shining reflection, and for your own sage words.

Looking forward to hearing from everyone else!

Peace and light (and have a good week, all!).

REPLY

**Thomas DeFreitas** July 15, 2019 at 4:17 am

Oops! Forgot the citation on Fr Gabriel Harty's quotation:



from The Riches of the Rosary (Dublin: Veritas, 1997), p. 36.

REPLY

**John E Hopkins** July 15, 2019 at 5:37 am

Tom,



Always great to hear from you! A fellow New Englander! Love what Father Harty says about the rosary. I don't pray my beads enough, but sometimes, when I do, I insert my own sorrowful, glorious, joyful, or luminous mysteries and contemplate how God was working through those.

REPLY

**Thomas DeFreitas** July 16, 2019 at 7:13 pm

Sounds like a wonderfully fruitful and perfectly sound method!  
And yes, fellow New Englander, and fellow Bay Stater, if I'm not mistaken?



REPLY

**Annie** July 15, 2019 at 11:25 pm

"Chair prayer" and "bed med"! I love those! Thank you!



REPLY

**Thomas DeFreitas** July 16, 2019 at 7:12 pm

You're most welcome!



REPLY

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**Kathleen Magiera** July 15, 2019 at 5:30 am



Wow! I cried when I heard that song. The Spirit spoke to me through that song.

I am in a time of transition in my life not sure where I am going yet. God has given me the gift of mentoring others. Hope it helps build a better world.

Please keep me in prayers. God is not finished with me yet.

Kathleen

REPLY

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**John E Hopkins** July 15, 2019 at 6:06 am



Good morning, Sr. Melannie, and thank you for this thought-provoking meditation on the steady movement of the spirit in our lives and in the world.

First, I've got to read me some Barbara Brown Taylor! The quotation above is this beautifully crafted combination of spiritual insight and poetry.

Second, for years the theory of natural evolution was anathema to Christian thinking, and for some our Christian sisters and brothers it still is. But I see evolution as God's way of "renewing the face of the earth," God's creative imagination at work, if you will.

Third, the Catholic Church is evolving, too. My wise daughter once told me the church is like a huge cargo ship – it takes a long time to change direction. But we have seen the church's slow turn in our life time. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure no lay person could give out communion until the late 1960's, yes? And would you ever see lay-women on the altar pre-Vatican II? I went to a Mass recently where everyone on the altar – lector, Eucharistic ministers, cantor, altar servers – except the priest was a woman.

My hope is that one day there is no "except the priest."

God bless you, Sr. Melannie!

REPLY

**Ed Johnson** July 15, 2019 at 11:51 am



John,

Peace back to you. I believe you are in Massachusetts? Think I read that in one of your posts. Have you visited St. Mary's Monastery in Massachusetts? I actually live in Florida, and am an oblate of St. Leo Monastery in Fla. One of my fellow oblates introduced me to a daily post from Brother Jerome Leo at St. Mary's.....daily reading from the Rule, and reflection from Brother Jerome Leo.....good stuff! Have a great week.....Ed J.

REPLY

**Ed Johnson** July 15, 2019 at 6:45 am



It is easier to stay consciously connected to God during my dedicated devotions, than throughout the hustle and bustle of daily activities. It takes mindfulness and awareness of God and The Holy Spirit during "ordinary living." I

try to "pray without ceasing," as St. Paul tells us.....Not so easy, though! I am also encouraged by The Rule of St. Benedict, and my connection to fellow oblates, who are models of Christian living and action. Reaching out to others, such as tutoring children, and working with special needs persons, is humbling, and necessary, for my continued spiritual growth. Thank you, Sister. Excellent thoughts to ponder and act upon.

Ed J

REPLY

**John E Hopkins** July 15, 2019 at 6:57 am



Hi Ed,

I, too, am a Benedictine Oblate! Pax!

REPLY

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**Mary M Nausadis** July 15, 2019 at 8:29 am



So much food for thought with all that has been said by all of you.....We are told that Scripture is the LIVING word of God, which means it is alive right now in my life. With that in mind, how could this living word of God not have grown, evolved, during all those years and in each of the lives of all the people who have come before me? If we are co-creating with Christ, then there is certainly more to be said about revelation.....I believe revelation is an ongoing gift, filled with the Spirit, not a completion that was written in the Bible.

I am currently studying/reading numerous books on white supremacy, racism, the complicity of the christian church with slavery, theology of Black liberation plus several more with the hope that I will be better able to truly love and respect my neighbors of any color or creed.

God has also given me the gift of listening which I am able to share as a spiritual director, something I feel is more a gift to me than one from me.

Thank you all for the food you have given me this Monday morning,

Mary

REPLY

**Helen Kemper** July 15, 2019 at 11:22 am



Hi Sr. Melannie,

Thank you for starting off my week with this beautiful reflection. As an SND associate (Fl) I know God is not finished with me. Thank goodness! However at 93 I think He better hurry up. Your Sunflower Seeds help me keep my mind on track. I thank our good and gracious God every day for the blessing that the Sisters of Notre Dame have been in my life.

Have a blessed week

REPLY

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**Jean Canatsey** July 15, 2019 at 1:51 pm



Thank you, Sr. Melannie, for again starting my week off with so much food for thought! Thanks also to Thomas DeFreitas for sharing Fr. Gabriel Harty's reflections on the Rosary. The thought of using my own mysteries really appeals to me.

Having worked for the Church as a Liturgical Musician since around 1950, I appreciated the comparison to a huge cargo ship. In retrospect, though, it has moved a lot.

By the way, my husband and I really enjoyed the song and the beautiful pictures too!

REPLY

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**Marilyn A Friga** July 16, 2019 at 3:42 pm



Thank you for your insights, they are meaningful.

So true, the Holy Spirit is constantly working to bring us closer to being one through love.

I believe I have the gift of genuine interest in people and their well being which is reflected in the various activities I take part in: Centering Prayer Group, Scripture Study and Water Aerobics.

My daily centering prayer and awareness of the Trinity in my life are my means of staying in touch.

REPLY

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**Lorna Greicius** July 17, 2019 at 2:57 pm



Thank you Sister for this timely reflection. We are all on this journey and indeed God is not done with us any of us yet. Interesting, I am part of a group of women in Ashtabula that is currently doing a book study on Barbara Lee's book, God Isn't Finished With Me Yet. It too offers many insights as we "discover the spiritual graces of later life."

Lorna Greicius  
Associate

REPLY

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**Kathleen Magiera** July 17, 2019 at 7:25 pm



I am reading Barbara Lee's book for a second time. A good one.

REPLY

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**Sr Patrick Joseph, SND** July 19, 2019 at 5:07 pm



Dear Melannie, thank you for this beautiful reflection and song about God not being finished with me yet! It reminds me to be more gentle with myself when troubles come and they seem insurmountable. I know the Lord is not finished but is still working with my heart and soul. God. Bless  
Your retreat in Syracuse this weekend . While miss you at Jubilee too! ❤️

REPLY

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