



Sunflower Seeds

Celebrating Everyday Spirituality



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Good News!

by MELANNIE SVOBODA SND on FEBRUARY 25, 2019

How did you feel when you saw the title of today's blog? Were you surprised? Were you curious? Were you eager to read on? The fact is, we are bombarded daily with news. Often it is bad news. So, today I thought we could take a break from bad news and focus on ten pieces of essentially good news:

1. If you are reading this, you are among the 86% of the world's population who are literate. In 1820, the world literacy rate was 12%.
2. If you are reading this, you have access to the internet. In 1995, internet users totaled 16 million or 0.4% of the world population. In June 2018, that number was 4,208,000,000 or 55.1% of the world population.
3. Even some of the world's "bad news" like global warming has a good side. This news has caused millions of people to become more concerned for the future of planet earth. This awareness has led millions of us to be more saving of natural resources, to recycle, to appreciate more the beauty and diversity of our world, and to invest in actions and policies that address the underlying causes of pollution and global warming.
4. When it comes to charitable giving, millions of people are very generous. A study in 2016 listed the top ten countries when it comes to charitable giving based on the percentage of the Gross Domestic Product. Those countries are: 1) United States 2) New Zealand 3) Canada 4) United Kingdom 5) South Korea 6) Singapore 7) India 8) Russia 9) Italy 10) Netherlands. One example: In 2016, American



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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individuals, estates, foundations, and corporations contributed an estimated \$390 billion to charity.

5. Ever since Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase “Global Village” in the 1960’s, people all over the world have become increasingly aware of our interconnectedness with each other. What happens on the other side of the world



impacts us on this side. Similarly, our decisions, policies, events, and attitudes impact people around the world. This awareness is crucial to our future.

6. Diseases that once killed millions of people (bubonic plague, small pox, polio, tuberculosis) have been eradicated or have become increasingly rare in many parts of

the world.

7. Child labor, once a common practice in the industrialized world, is now outlawed in most developed countries. (In 1900, 18% of the U.S. workers were under 16. Most worked in factories, mines, and agriculture.)
8. According to the Pew Research Center, 55% of adults say they pray daily. Another 25% say they pray weekly.
9. A recent study showed that more than 75% of adults in developed countries say they are happy. The happiest countries are Sweden, Canada, and Australia. The U.S. was 6th. But a clear majority of these happy people also said they wish their life was simpler.
10. If you are reading this, you are still alive on earth. That means you still have time to love others and to do more good things! And that certainly is good news!



Did any piece of good news here stand out for you? If so, why?

What piece of good news would you add to this list?

How can YOU become even more good news for others?

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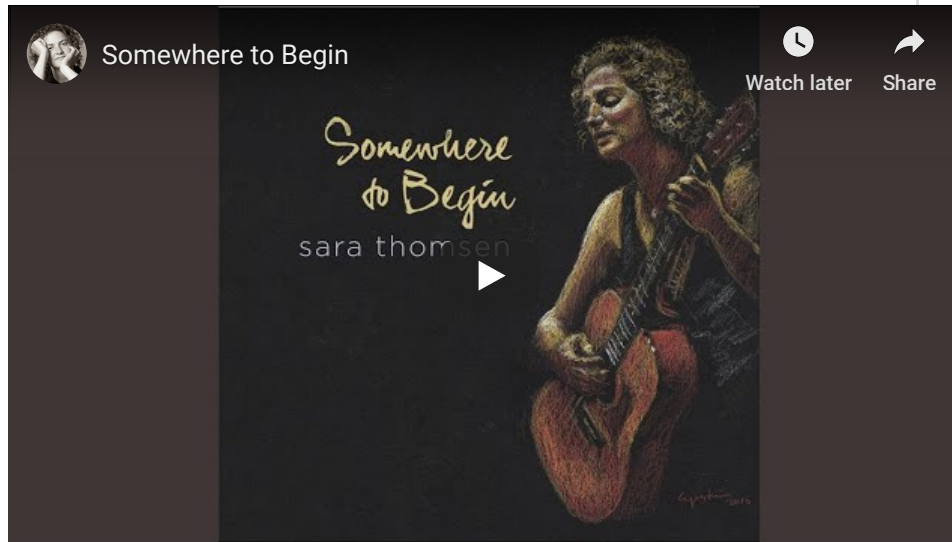
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Today's song is by Sara Thomsen. It's called "Somewhere to Begin." I'm including the lyrics below. I was really touched by this song the first time I heard it. I hope it touches your heart today:



People say to me, "Oh, you gotta be crazy! How can you sing in times like these?"

Don't you read the news? Don't you know the score? How can you sing when so many others grieve?"

People say to me, "What kind of fool believes that a song will make a difference in the end?"

By way of a reply, I say a fool such as I who sees a song as somewhere to begin,

A song is somewhere to begin.

The search for something worth believing in. If changes are to come

there are things that must be done, and a song is somewhere to begin.

Additional verses: 2) Dream... 3) Love...

I invite you to respond below to today's reflection and/or song. My readers tell me how much they love reading all the responses!

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{ [37](#) comments... read them below or [add one](#) }

John E Hopkins February 25, 2019 at 5:31 am



Thank you, Sr. Melannie! This week's blog has been a balm to my weary soul! Good news to add to this list? Your blog!

REPLY

Linda Macdonald February 25, 2019 at 6:24 am



Hi Sister
Sometimes I stand up to friends who call the down-trodden uninformed. Thank you for the numbers on literacy and internet connectedness. I've long thought of radio as a great asset.

REPLY

Thomas DeFreitas February 25, 2019 at 6:25 am



The good news abounds!

Poems are being written, and songs are being sung. My friends Elena, Mary, Linda, Hilary, Steven and others, are all supremely gifted poets. I am grateful for their shining and luminous example. I am graced to have had poetry mentors such as Victor, Miriam, Cathie.

I have friends in church basements. Serene, courageous, and wise friends. One new friend in particular impresses me favourably with her friendliness, her sense of humour, her warm and beautiful humanity. (Recently, I joked about how good I was at making coffee: "I got skills!" And she shot back, "They're multiplyin'?" One has to be "of a certain age" to get that one!)

I've attained, quite improbably, through some combination of dumb luck and the grace of God, the age of 49 years, 8 months, and 7 days. How is this possible? I've cobbled together 107 days without a drink. One day, one mindful choice, at a time, as my friends in the church basements like to say.

And let me end with a paraphrase of dear Fr Hopkins: "Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes not his [...] through the features of [people's] faces." Yes, ten thousand times, yes! Another great Catholic poet, Jessica Powers, loved sparrows. I do too. They're small and scrappy. I'm large and lumbering, but I hope I'm alert to the good news, to the graces, wherever they might announce themselves!

Thank you all for listening. Peace and light.

REPLY

Michelle Kotak February 25, 2019 at 10:11 am

Thank you! For sharing...because I'm one who appreciates the responses in this blog. I find they enhance and build on Sr. Melanie's reflection.



REPLY

Kathy Donnermeyer February 25, 2019 at 4:09 pm

Congrats on 107 days!!



REPLY

Thomas DeFreitas February 25, 2019 at 7:30 pm

It's fun, heartwarming, and soul-enriching to read everybody's comments. I quite agree!



REPLY

Kathy Donnermeyer February 25, 2019 at 4:14 pm

Congrats on your 107 days!



REPLY

Thomas DeFreitas February 25, 2019 at 7:29 pm

Thank you so much!



REPLY

Ceil February 26, 2019 at 4:43 pm

One day at a time - I'll be praying for you.



REPLY

Elizabeth Hillegas February 27, 2019 at 8:52 am

Congratulations !! And best wishes as you continue on your journey.



REPLY

Susan Slaninka February 25, 2019 at 7:12 am



Loved this morning's message and the focus on good news. I live in south Jersey at the shore and there's actually a publication here, Bright News, that is a breath of fresh air. Another great positive news show is CBS Sunday Morning which is filled with positive news. I've never understood why the news division of most networks believes that it's only real news if it's bad. Wouldn't it be wonderful if at least half of every news show was filled with positive things. That would truly be "balanced" news coverage.

REPLY

Ilene February 25, 2019 at 10:39 am

I agree. I'm afraid to watch local news for the weather, which they report as catastrophic event, even when it's raining. And on a slow news night, editors look for the most horrific crimes that have happened throughout the country to stretch the news, where they could report on goodness.



REPLY

Mary February 25, 2019 at 7:48 am



Dear Sr Melannie,

Your blog is always good news on Mondays. Every new day is good news, a new

opportunity to live well and make a difference. I thank God every morning for the gifts with which I've been blessed as well as the chance to share them with others. Thank you do much for your good news!

REPLY

Pete February 25, 2019 at 8:01 am



Yes, love is somewhere to begin! Once you conquer the bashfulness of love, it is a great sharing tool for everyone. Hugging goes along with this. People appreciate a good hug. Good news is always welcome in our house. Bad news is there, but not dwelled upon. Thanks Melanie!

REPLY

Joe Johnson February 25, 2019 at 9:02 am



270 deputies in San Luis Obispo County have been trained during the last 6 months in CIT (crisis intervention training). So deescalation of situations with the mentally ill can take place; all of this training can help law enforcement folks be more like guardians and not just warriors!

REPLY

Ilene February 25, 2019 at 10:42 am



Wow! That is good news. Thank you for posting such a promising change.

REPLY

Anita Compagnone February 25, 2019 at 9:06 am



So uplifting! Thanks Sr Melannie!

REPLY

Char February 25, 2019 at 9:18 am



Sr Melanie
YOU are our JOY every Monday!

Blessings
Char

REPLY

Tina February 25, 2019 at 9:31 am



Enjoyed the Good News Stats, made me stop and realize how blessed I am.
LOVE the song! As always, look forward to your words of wisdom each week.
Thank you!
Tina

REPLY

MARY NAUSADIS February 25, 2019 at 10:01 am



As I reflect on this I realize that I have much good news to add.....

Good news: I will be a great-grandmother in June!
Good news: I have 4 siblings who are all still alive and loving being alive!
Good news: I have a warm comfortable home to return to each time I go out!
Good news: I know I am beloved by God!
Good news: I have 4 healthy children and 7 healthy grandchildren!
Good news: I can see, hear, taste, touch and smell!
Good news I can still dance!

The list is truly endless if we but see!

Thank you Sr. Melannie for giving me this opportunity to see all the good news in
my life!
Mary

REPLY

Sherri February 25, 2019 at 2:31 pm



Love this post!

REPLY

Jean Canatsey February 25, 2019 at 10:07 am

Sr. Melanie, you are indeed good news every Monday morning!
My husband, Jack, commented that it was very good news that Australia, which began as a penal colony, was now one of the happiest places on earth! My sister, Ruth, commented that my husband and I bring good news through our prison ministry and the song this morning certainly was good news. We listened twice!
Happy Monday!



REPLY

Barbara February 25, 2019 at 10:30 am



Oh truly, that is a wonderful song. I have found in the last year that singing heals your heart from the wounds of every day life and helps you tremendously in being able to help others. Thank you so much for what you do to make our lives a better place. You truly make a difference.

REPLY

Valorie Shue February 25, 2019 at 10:39 am



I loved all this good news and the song. I thought of inserting "prayer"

REPLY

AnnMarie February 25, 2019 at 11:48 am



Love, love, love! The holy Spirit speaks so strongly thru your words. Living joyfully & abundantly is the message I receive so often from you. Thank you.

REPLY

Zita February 25, 2019 at 12:11 pm



I found the title intriguing and since I'm going thru lots of challenges in my life at the moment, I had to read on. I enjoyed all the facts that support the good news, I live w/ someone who sees more negative than positive. I liked the song alot - reminded me of songwriters from the 60s and 70s. This brightened up my day enough for me to write.

I have one of the weekly articles from 2.29.16 that I've bookmarked - for the thought and esp. the music. It's titled Give Yourself a Ticket and an Ice Cream Cone w/ the song Just Be Held By Casting Crowns. I play this alot when life overwhelms me.

REPLY

Marilyn Woidat February 25, 2019 at 1:11 pm



Lately, my morning mantra is simply:

God grant me a peaceful mind, a generous heart, and a contagious smile!

I begin each day with God quietly and reflecting on scripture verses , and reading from Henri Nouwen, Pope Francis and Martin Luther homilies. Then praying to Mary, I ask her to intercede for family and friends using all of their names.

REPLY

Sherri February 25, 2019 at 2:49 pm



Sr. Melannie,

You are such an inspiration. I love reading your blogs. Like you, I have a collection of quotes that I've saved over the years. I find music uplifting and appreciate you including the songs in your blogs. I'm always delighted to discover a new artist. Please pray for me as I am starting a Bible Study group for Middle School girls this week. For our first meeting, we are planning to use your March 1st reflection from Give Us This Day on friendship.

May God continue to bless you!

REPLY

Kathy Donnermeyer February 25, 2019 at 4:12 pm



Thank you Sr. Melannie,
Absolutely LOVE the song.

As others have already said, your blog is good news every Monday.

Today my good news is that my daughter had her baby on Wednesday, so I am a grandmother to a dear baby boy! This will be a new experience and I'm looking forward to it.

REPLY

Thomas DeFreitas February 25, 2019 at 7:32 pm
Congratulations!



REPLY

MARY NAUSADIS February 27, 2019 at 11:48 am
Being a grandma is like nothing else.....enjoy and savor your journey!



REPLY

Shirley February 25, 2019 at 10:41 pm



The blog was great! The song was fantastic, really loved the song!
Thanks Sister Melannie! Have a great week!

REPLY

Karen Suggitt February 26, 2019 at 8:24 am



Thanks Sister M, you always seem to inspire me with just the right words and song that I needed to hear for the day. You are a blessing to all who are reading & watching your Monday morning stories. Thanks again Karen

REPLY

Annie February 28, 2019 at 11:56 pm



That is a beautiful song! Thank you. We all need a little good news. And a song can make everything go a little easier.

REPLY

Melannie Svoboda SND March 1, 2019 at 7:43 am



A BIG thank you to all of you who responded to this week's blog--and shared some of your good news with all of us! Having readers like you is very good news for me! Thank you all!

Sr. Melannie

REPLY

Doug Chesnulovitch March 1, 2019 at 12:48 pm



Dear Sister,

Forgive me this is an of the cuff question. But first some background.

At this morning's mass, in the prayer book we use, I read a reflection you had written on Friendship. It was absolutely beautiful and something I'd like to share with others. Question. How may I acquire it? I'm retiring soon and would love to share it with my work friends...Many thanks for what you do and God Bless!

Kindly,
Doug

REPLY

Melannie Svoboda SND March 1, 2019 at 1:42 pm



Dear Doug,

Yes, you may use that reflection with your friends. I ask only that you include my name as the author and the publication: "Give Us this Day" March 2019, Liturgical Press. I'm happy that you found it meaningful. Thank you! Sr. Melannie

REPLY

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