



# Sunflower Seeds

Celebrating Everyday Spirituality



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## Mottos and Slogans

by MELANNIE SVOBODA SND on AUGUST 4, 2014

A friend gave me a card the other day tucked in a small paper bag from the Hallmark greeting card company. Printed on the bag was Hallmark's motto: "Life is a special occasion." I really like that! I know, I know, the purpose of the motto is to sell more cards, but I really resonate with their words. In fact, if I ever want a motto for myself, I just might steal theirs!



The incident got me thinking about mottos and slogans in general. Just for the fun of it, can you name the companies with the following mottos?

- 1) I'm lovin' it!
- 2) Just do it
- 3) Good to the last drop
- 4) Quality is job one
- 5) American by birth. Rebel by choice.

The answers are:

## 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!

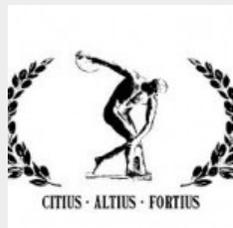
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1) MacDonald's, 2) Nike, 3) Maxwell House Coffee, 4) Ford Motor Company, 5) Harley Davidson Motorcycles.



The Olympic Games motto is faster, higher, stronger.

Some mottos try to inspire. The Girl Scouts motto, for example, is "Be prepared." (So is the Boy Scouts).

Other mottos serve as warnings. The American Express motto is, "Don't leave home without it." The Red Cross motto is "The greatest tragedy is indifference," and The United Negro Fund states: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Some mottos are one word. IBM's motto is "Think," 3 M's is "Innovation," and Samsung's is "Imagine."

Sometimes mottos contradict one another. The IMAX motto is "Think big," while Volkswagon's is "Think small." Some mottos sound good but seem pretty vague to me. The Bayer company says, "Science for a better life"; Boeing says, "Forever new frontiers," Sony says, "Make. Believe"; Google says, "Don't be evil"; and Reebok says, "I am what I am." That last one sounds like a good excuse for me to do just about anything I want!

Some mottos are almost poetic. The Amtrak motto says, "See America at See level." Clever! And I've always liked the play on words for the John Deere company: "Nothing runs like a Deere." The Allstate Insurance motto is comforting: "You are in good hands." It could be a religious motto if we imagine the hands are God's hands.

Religious organizations sometimes have mottos too. The Benedictine order's motto is "Pray and work"; The Dominican's traditional motto is "Truth" but I found another one for them: "Praise, bless, preach." The Jesuits' motto is from St. Ignatius: "For the greater glory of God." If you went to a Jesuit school you probably were taught to write the Latin abbreviation for that motto on your papers: A.M.D.G. (*ad majorem Dei gloriam*). The United Methodist Church's motto is a challenging one: "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors."



Popes have mottos. The two recently canonized Popes are John XXIII (motto: "Obedience and Peace") and John Paul II (motto: "Totally yours" which expresses his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary). Our current Holy Father, Pope Francis, kept the motto he had as a bishop: "*miserando atque eligendo*." The words are from a sermon by Venerable Bede for the feast of St. Matthew: "Jesus sees the tax collector, and since he sees *by having mercy and by choosing*, he says to him, 'Follow me.'" It was on the feast of St. Matthew in 1953 that

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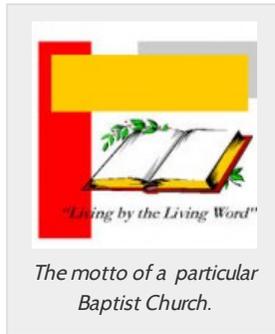
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the 17-year-old Jorge Bergoglio had some type of religious experience where he felt God's mercy pouring down upon him and calling him to religious life as a Jesuit.

What do you think about mottoes and slogans? Do you have any favorites?



Does your parish have a motto? If your family had a motto, what would it be? (One man told me recently his family motto was, "It is all part of the great adventure." His wife came up with this when, many years ago, they were driving across the country in a station wagon with their five small children—and he was beginning to get very impatient!) If you had to write a personal motto for yourself, what would it be? Your motto doesn't have to be perfect. Just "Do your best" (Cub Scouts).

As usual, I'd love you hear from you. But right now, I think I'll "Head for the mountains" (Busch beer), "The happiest place on earth" (Disneyland), "Because I'm worth it" (L'Oreal).

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**Kathleen Magiera** August 4, 2014 at 5:22 am



Another great reflection Sr. Melannie.

As we are in the last phases of preparing for Bible Camp, my motto is "Trust God!" It seems to be the motto for what we are doing to share the gospel with all our children.

Please keep us in prayer.

Kathleen

REPLY

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**Carol Ann Petersen, OSB** August 4, 2014 at 9:13 am



Love it! Thank you.

REPLY

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**Ellen** August 4, 2014 at 9:25 am



My motto is not very original I'm afraid but I have been a worrier my whole life. I can remember my first grade teacher Sister Daria telling my Mom that I was a worrier. And so I rely on "Let go, Let God." I use it as a mantra that soothes me and reminds me of who is really in charge!

I lost my Mom two years ago and I know how blessed I was to have her with me until she was 90. I miss her terribly. I recently found a quote from Oprah that she used in eulogizing Maya Angelou - "Her spirit abides with me." I feel that about my Mom. It's helped me recognize her continued presence in my life.

REPLY

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**Skip Meadows** August 5, 2014 at 9:33 am



Beautiful!

REPLY

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**Chris Keil** August 4, 2014 at 10:06 am



I think my motto would be..... "Life, Experience it!". I find myself telling so many people when they are in a situation that is unpleasant or they feel they are being stagnant or unfulfilled in, to continue doing the best you can, for there is really very little in life that is forever, and you can go from one experience to another and use those as a foundation for future endeavors and experiences in life. In the end, I tell them.....it may make a great story!  
Thanks Sr. Melannie.

REPLY

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**Mary Schneider** August 4, 2014 at 10:25 am



It's never too late.

REPLY

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**Susan Bachner** August 4, 2014 at 10:45 am



I use to tell our children (as they were growing up) that:  
"You can do anything you put your mind to."

REPLY

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**Kathy OFS** August 4, 2014 at 10:48 am



My motto is taken from St. Francis and it is in Gaelic our leader passed on the different languages of how to say this so I took it on as mine in every e-mail I send. Siochan Agus Maitheas ( PEACE ALL GOOD) I also favor YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE IN THE EYES OF GOD ST. FRANCIS. How can one not like this beautiful St.

REPLY

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**JoAnn Haney, OSF** August 4, 2014 at 11:45 am



Dear S. Melannie, just celebrated Golden Jubilee on Saturday Aug. 2nd the feast of the Portiuncula. We had Fr. Michael Joncas as presider and he gave each of us a motto as part of his reflection so your blog today brings all that back to mind. My is "God is good, all the time." He gave them to us from what we had written about ourselves in advance. It was a glorious day and memories abundant. Filled with JOY! JoAnn

REPLY

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**Nona Higgins** August 4, 2014 at 12:11 pm



Happiness comes from within.

REPLY

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**Margie Plunkett** August 4, 2014 at 12:58 pm



I would like to think that my motto, my words to live by, are: "let them only hear good from my mouth".

REPLY

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**Cathy** August 4, 2014 at 2:56 pm



I grew up in St. Pius X Parish in Dallas, TX. The motto is "Love One Another". It is posted inside the main entrance so you see it as you leave the church. I feel like I grew up in a small town in the midst of a big city, so much love expressed in so many ways through multiple generations. Great examples for us as we grew up. We were fortunate to have the same pastor for forty years. Yesterday a group of ladies who served on the parish board together celebrated his 93rd birthday with lunch and laughter!

REPLY

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**Sr. Susan Kusz, SND** August 4, 2014 at 5:16 pm



I so love St. Julie's "Oh, how good is the dear good God!" and find myself saying it many times a day!

REPLY

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**Patricia M** August 4, 2014 at 7:01 pm



Having raised a somewhat vain teenage girl many years ago, I would often remind her of who she was by saying, "you are as pretty as you act." She is 42 now and still recalls that motto.

REPLY

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**Sister Miriam** August 4, 2014 at 8:03 pm



Above the altar in our chapel:  
" My child give me thy heart"

REPLY

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**Celeste Albers** August 4, 2014 at 11:40 pm



Three years ago 7 Dominican congregations merged on April 9th and chose the name "Dominican Sisters of Peace". Our motto is "Be Peace! Build Peace! Preach Peace!" It echoes in my mind and heart often each day and it calls me to examine my life each evening and ask how have I been peace to our world this day.

REPLY

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**Sr, Jeannette Roy, FCSCJ** August 5, 2014 at 8:17 am



Dear s. Melanie,

I so enjoy your weekly message. I was blessed to make a weekend retreat with you at Berakah in NH a few years ago. My favorite motto I have been using in all my emails is: "God loves you and so do I". Many, many years ago I heard this from Dr. Schuller. He was such a positive influence. Have a great day and thanks for all. God loves you and so do I.

Sr. Jeannette

REPLY

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**Skip Meadows** August 5, 2014 at 9:31 am



Many years ago, while trying to discern my purpose, I wrote my personal motto.

"My purpose is to love and affirm all with whom I interact, to offer help where possible, and hope always."

REPLY

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**Barb** August 5, 2014 at 3:21 pm



Mine is "Choose Joy" –a constant reminder to me to find joy in everything.

REPLY

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**Linda** August 5, 2014 at 3:47 pm



I have had much trouble in my life, but many years ago I came across a quote by Julian of Norwich which has served as a literal 'life-line' to me so often. I even have a silver bracelet which I wear every day engraved with the quote: "All shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well!"

REPLY

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**marian** August 5, 2014 at 7:21 pm



Do all the Good you can,  
by all the means you can,  
in all the ways you can,  
in all the times you can,  
to all the people you can,  
as long as ever you can.

REPLY

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**Tom** August 5, 2014 at 7:47 pm



I have always liked STILL WATER RUNS DEEP. As a pastor, I thought SPARE ME THE DRAMA would be handy. If I would have ever needed an episcopal motto (perish the thought) it may have been the Latin version of SHE THOUGHT HE WAS THE GARDENER.

REPLY

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**linda** August 6, 2014 at 3:44 pm



I love "she thought he was the gardener"!

REPLY

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**Annie** August 5, 2014 at 8:07 pm



I just gave my brother-in-law a birthday gift & had no gift bags on hand that were appropriate for a guy. So I used a Hallmark one with that slogan on it! Perfect!

REPLY

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**Jean Shott** August 6, 2014 at 8:50 am



When we were newlyweds looking to buy our first house – and full of doubts – we asked our parents for their opinions. Mom said “If it is meant to be, it will work out”. I have followed this advice many times in my life – and repeated it to others. I take it to mean “if it’s God’s plan for me, it will happen”.

REPLY

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**Debbie** August 6, 2014 at 10:03 am



My motto is: Honest, Open-minded, Willing (which is HOW to live)

My second favorite is: I’m ready...when You are ready. (shorthand for the 6th and 7th steps in 12-step programs)

REPLY

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**Karen** August 6, 2014 at 12:06 pm



When I was growing up our family motto was “If you have a choice between luck and brains, take luck”, which we all thought was funny then, but I have come to appreciate it more as I grow older and see the role that so-called “luck” (or grace, or hand of God) has played in my life.

My Dad’s favorite motto was “You can’t push a rope” which explains and applies to a whole lot of interpersonal relationships.

Thanks to all who replied – it adds more great and inspiring reading an already inspiring post!

REPLY

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**florence** August 7, 2014 at 1:12 pm



Like Ellen, I have always been a worrier. So I too, say to myself Let GO AND LET GOD. My children have given me a book that says Don’t sweat the small stuff and ,it’s all small stuff.

REPLY

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**bozo** August 8, 2014 at 5:32 am



My motto is -

There but for the grace of God go I.

Always has been and always will be.  
Great article!!

REPLY

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**Cathy Baier** August 9, 2014 at 10:15 am



I'm alive each day to make God's love loud and visible! And for reflection:  
what gospel do others see in me?

REPLY

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**Stan** August 10, 2014 at 3:26 pm



I really like "Keep Him 1" as a challenge to my daily living.

REPLY

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