When I ministered with the Jesuits in Detroit in the 90’s, I made regular trips between Detroit and Cleveland where my family and religious congregation were. Whenever I did, I was always amazed at all the farmland I saw in northwestern Ohio. For miles and miles, on both sides of the turnpike, flat fields stretched as far as the eye could see. In summer these fields burgeoned with green crops, mostly corn and soybeans. But in the fall, after the harvest, these same fields were brown and bare, plowed up and lying fallow.

I love the word fallow. This rich and beautiful word conjures up images of land that is intentionally left unseeded, thus giving it time to rest and reclaim its nutrients. The fallow fields remind me that I need such times in my life, as well. Times when I
During fallow time I note the forward progress of a woolly worm. What constitutes fallow time? It varies from person to person. During my fallow time, I watch clouds float by, I finger the bark of an old oak tree, I note the forward progress of a woolly worm, I listen to the steady patter of the rain on my roof, I stroke a cat nestled on my lap, I watch the finches on my bird feeder, I mull over a line from scripture, I stroll through my neighborhood, I stir the tapioca on the stove, I slip into a warm bubble bath.

During my fallow time, I do very little. Instead, I be. Though it may look as if I'm wasting time, I'm actually hallowing time. Fallow time hushes the superficial, thus allowing the beneath to speak. It quiets my incessant reasoning, thus inviting a deeper intelligence to come forth. Some of my best writing has arisen from my fallow time. Some of my best praying too.

During fallow time I also remember. I remember my oneness with a God who is truly and deeply and madly in love with me, with all of us. I remember my profound longing for this God, for Jesus, for the Spirit. I remember my connectedness with all who have ever lived, who are living now, and who will live in the future. I remember my oneness with planet earth, with her rivers and forests and pandas and stars.

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

Learn more

Subscribe to Sunflower Seeds

Subscribe to Sunflower Seeds today to receive notification of new blog posts.

Subscribe to Sunflower Seeds via RSS  
Subscribe to Sunflower Seeds by Email

Recent Posts

A Few Words about Cats
A Book on Beauty
Praying beyond our Windows
Behold the Platypus!
Retreat Jottings

About the Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon, Ohio

The Sisters of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio, belong to an international congregation of more than two thousand apostolic women religious. We are one in mind and one in heart for the transformation of the world in Christ.
Fallow time exalts me. It tells me I am more than what I do. It humbles me, joining me to the ageless rhythms and yearnings of the cosmos. Fallow time nudges me toward specific gospel action in my particular time and place.

Jesus loved fallow time. During his fallow time he pondered the miracles of everyday life: lilies bobbing, bread rising, wine fermenting, hens sheltering their chicks, and gangly camels squeezing through narrow gates. He pondered the mystery and goodness of the ordinary people he met: a Roman soldier filled with compassion for a servant, a leper returning to say “thank you,” a widow depositing two small coins—all she had to live on—into the temple treasury, a bleeding woman daring to believe in the power of a single touch. In the Garden of Gethsemane, shortly before his arrest, Jesus begged to be saved from the horrific death he was about to endure. But then he added, “Not my will, but yours be done.” That was the voice of his fallow time.

This week we in the United States are celebrating Thanksgiving Day, a day often preceded by intense activity for many of us—especially if we’re hosting the Thanksgiving dinner. In the midst of our busyness, let us not forget our need for fallow time. This Thanksgiving, as we’re thanking God for all the blessings in our lives, let us not forget to thank God for the gift of fallow time.

The song today is “Be Still, My Soul” by Kari Jobe. The melody is “Finlandia,” the beautiful symphonic hymn written by the famous Finnish composer Jean Sibelius in 1889. May this song be a part of your fallow time today.
Do you find a need for fallow time in your life? If so, what constitutes fallow time for you?

What are you particularly giving thanks for this Thanksgiving Day?

**PS:** My new book is out. It's called *The Lord Is My Shepherd* and is a series of reflections on Psalm 23. It's a small book (4" x 6") that easily slips into a purse or pocket. The reflections focus on themes such as trust, gratitude, healing, forgiveness, hope, and more. Each chapter also includes reflective questions for personal use or group sharing. Each chapter concludes with a prayer. You can order a book through my book store, Amazon.com, or Twenty-Third Publications. Thank you!
This Fallow Time, the body rests – the soul mind replenishes itself.

Wonderful reflection for Thanksgiving Week. Fallow time for me is my 20 minutes of silent meditation each morning. A time just to listen.

Happy Thanksgiving Sister!
Doris  November 23, 2015 at 9:08 am

Resting from producing . . . reclaiming my nutrients. I needed to hear that message today. Thank you.

Jean  November 23, 2015 at 9:33 am

Happy Thanksgiving to you.
I am thankful for my Mondays with your messages.

Julie  November 23, 2015 at 10:05 am

I am grateful for your “chat” every Monday and for you friendship. The events of life give cause for fallow time from time to time. Happy Thanksgiving.

Mary Schneider  November 23, 2015 at 10:22 am

Thank you for reminding me of how important my fallow time...it helps my faith to grow. Thank you also for the new book; I will order it today. Happy Thanksgiving!
Patty  
November 23, 2015 at 10:38 am

Thank you, Sister. Happy Thanksgiving Day to you.

Suzanne Sayer  
November 23, 2015 at 12:35 pm

Beautiful reflection—your fallow time was very productive!

Happy Thanksgiving! Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Nona Higgins  
November 23, 2015 at 2:20 pm

I so appreciate your reflections each week, Sister. “Fallow” is an interesting word and I experience it most when viewing God’s creation or hearing moving music. Happy Thanksgiving!

Barbara  
November 23, 2015 at 4:03 pm

Thank you, thank you. You have been such an added supplement to my life. Not nutritional, but spiritual. Have a super joyful Thanksgiving.
Annette  November 23, 2015 at 6:59 pm

Thank you sister! I needed that! Happy Thanksgiving!

REPLY

Odelia  November 23, 2015 at 9:00 pm

Thank you for this reminder of my need for fallow time. Happy Thanksgiving!
Odelia

REPLY

frank  November 23, 2015 at 10:31 pm

We all need fallow time to be thankful for our many blessing. Let us not get caught up in the afluenza of the "black friday". Frank

REPLY

Lu G  November 24, 2015 at 2:14 am

Sister Melannie, Thank You for another year of very interesting topics. I’ve learned so much. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!
Lu

REPLY
Kathy D  November 24, 2015 at 7:33 am

I'm thankful for your reflections each week, even when I don't see it until Tuesday or Wednesday!

Fallow time is happening a bit for me right now – I have an entire week off work, even with Thanksgiving preparations my week has been slower, and less hectic than normal. Instead of working, I am doing other things that I enjoy but don't have enough time for in a normal week – helping distribute food bags yesterday to the needy, spending time quilting, and much more time for prayer and reflection. Just this simple change in routine gives me a chance to re-charge, and get ready for whatever comes next.

REPLY

srv  November 24, 2015 at 4:23 pm

Fallow time is my renewing time of quiet and peace of mind which nourishes my active life of teaching.

REPLY

Tom  November 24, 2015 at 9:55 pm

Thanks for making the connection between FALLOW and HALLOW. I have wonderful memories of the pure gift of fallow/hallow days in Chardon, provided by an Alberta Clipper or a Lake-Effect snow storm.

May you have a peaceful Thanksgiving.
Ed Johnson  November 25, 2015 at 4:44 am

Sister,
I love the Thanksgiving holiday. I think it is the “fallow time” among holidays, especially the busyness leading up to Christmas. And this Thanksgiving, my wife and I especially give thanks for our very 1st grandchild, nine month old Kathryn Ruth (Kate)....and the fact that she lives close to her Grandma and Grandpa, so we get to see her a lot, and watch her grow in God's tender care. May you have a Blessed, and Fallow, Thanksgiving, sister.

Ed J.

REPLY

JoAnn Welch  November 25, 2015 at 8:46 am

I am so thankful for fallow time in my daily half hour meditation...it has really calmed my spirit!!! Thanks, Sister!!! Happy Thanksgiving!!!
SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME WITNESS DAILY TO GOD'S GOODNESS AND PROVIDENT CARE.

Join us!
Contact our Vocation Director today.