

Sun and moon and stars of light:
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.

3. For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild:
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.

“Lord of all, to
thee we raise,
This our
joyful hymn
of praise.”

Pray with me:


*Gracious God, may all things lead me to you.
Whether I look at the sun, the moon, the stars
and the vast expanse in which they float, or
whether I look at the flowers of the field, the
trees of the forest, the beauties of the earth so
full of color and so glorious, may they speak to
me of your love and power; may they all sing
your praises in my heart. May I daily love you
and my neighbors as a way of thanking you
for your gifts. Amen. So be it.*

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MONTHLY REFLECTION
SERIES

Leaves of Gold

by Rev. Herb Yost, C.S.C.

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Under my clear deskpad cover, I have a card which was received on my 25th ordination anniversary in 2000. What attracted me were the words on the card's cover: "Life is the Spring name of God. Warmth is the Summer name of God. Color is the Autumn name of God. Silence is the Winter name of God."

At the time I was living at the Solitude of the Savior near Rolling Prairie, IN. The trailer was nestled on the shore of a small lake, surrounded by numerous old growth maple and beech trees. Those grandfather trees were a joy to live with, except when a heavy thunderstorm rolled through in the Spring or Summer. That was always a bit nervous-making; any one of those trees would have squashed the trailer had they been blown over! Along the same line, a heavy snowfall in winter might bring a couple days of isolation and sometimes no electricity!

But the Fall!! Oh my!! It was a pure cascade of golden maple and beech leaves. So many times while putting outdoor stuff to bed for the winter or splitting wood for the fireplace, I'd have to simply stop, look, listen, absorb the color and the silence, and pray my "Wow!" to God for the beauty of it all.

One Sunday morning, while sitting in the fireplace room and praying, I was watching the leaves fall. Part of me was thinking: "Well, guess I'm gonna hafta go out and rake leaves this afternoon." But then there was another thought: "What

does a leaf say when it hits the ground?"

At first I dismissed it as a humorous, frivolous thought. But the question wouldn't leave; it actually started to become important.

The first answer to the question came quickly: "Ouch!" Then "Oops!"... "To dust I shall return"... "The End." There were a few other silly answers, but "The End" kept bugging me. Finally it hit: what the leaf says when it hits the ground is "Amen...so be it." You can tell that process and answer were important to me, for I vividly remember it after all this time.

"Amen" is a perfect answer. The leaf emerged in the Spring, and for months did its part in bringing life to the tree, shelter from the sun, safe refuge for the birds and bugs, beauty for the eyes, sound for the ears. At the end of its life, having accomplished the mission for which it was created, it let go (or did the tree let it go? But that's for another reflection!!). The leaf fell to the ground, and from there entered into another new life of providing sustenance for an unseen world, thus entering into the eternal cycle of life. In life there is purpose and meaning. In death there is purpose and meaning. Amen. So be it.

By now, you may suspect where I'm going with this reflection. You're right. What will you be saying at the end of your life? Will you be able to say "Amen." Will you be able to let

go peacefully when the time comes, rejoicing over all you have accomplished in life, or will there be regrets or anger or perhaps an awareness of unfinished business or unspoken words?

November is a special month to be pondering the leaf that is my life, your life. While we're pondering the beauty and value of our lives, let's not forget those who have already fallen and who are now enjoying eternal life with the Father, Son, and Spirit. Our lives are built on their lives, as the lives of the generations after us are built on ours.



Sing with me:

1. For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies; over and around
us lies:
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.
2. For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,