

Reflections

by the
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The Constant Challenge to Grow

The warm breeze of summer has begun to turn into the coolness of autumn. The green leaves of trees will soon begin to form the technicolor panorama of an autumn landscape. The sun sets lower in the sky each evening. A new season of the year is once again beginning as we prepare to live through once again the annual cycle of death and resurrection as revealed in nature.

But this process of growth is not reserved for nature alone. It is part of being a human being and a Christian. For each of us there is the constant challenge to grow and develop as persons and believers in the message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So many dimensions of our life and experience have undergone change. A new Holy Father has been elected by the Cardinal-electors in Rome and his initial remarks and impression communicate a revitalized appreciation of the role of the Pope in each of our lives. We look to Pope John Paul I as the new leader of the Christian Catholic community and he offers us a new sense of life and hope.

Growth is evident in so many of the experiences we share. Our children begin a new school year and that small child of only a few years ago is now in high school or off to college for the first time. The flowers we planted last year are bursting forth in one final gasp of life before they also begin the slow process of death and resurrection again next Spring.

And the challenge to grow is proclaimed to each of us as believers in the Lord Jesus. This fall could well be the time to set aside that precious commodity of time itself to study our faith, to grow in an appreciation of the liturgy we celebrate, to search for those precious moments of quiet to spend in prayer and meditation, to become aware of the challenge each of us has to live out the ministry we have as bishop or priest, married or single, young or old, male or female whereby our lives proclaim the reality of the presence of the Lord.

In the brief time I have been in Montana, I have discovered the ways in which God still speaks to all of us from an entirely new perspective. He speaks through the priests and people it has been my privilege to meet in various gatherings throughout the diocese. He speaks in the wisdom and the words of children and adults. He speaks through nature. And the message, though articulated in different ways, is constantly repeated. We are challenged to grow as believers in the Lord. That is the most exciting adventure in which any of us could be involved.