

# Seasons of Life

By Fr. Bob McDonald

Our life here on earth is like the seasons of the year. Like seeds lying in the earth all Winter, we wait to be born. We come forth like plants in the Spring. We open up like flowers in the Summer. Then we fall like the seeds from the flower in Autumn.

Our Liturgy, celebrating the mystery of the Christian's journey on earth, follows a similar cycle: Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Good Friday and Easter.

**Change:** We change. We go through constant change, from birth to childhood, through youth, to adulthood, to an end of life on earth, through death to Everlasting Life. Our feelings change constantly, from minute to minute, hour to hour, day to day. And as we grow, we learn; we begin to understand the meaning of our life. Our Weekend showed us that sharing our feelings with one another we grow closer. And that is a source of happiness.

With every season of our life, our feelings change. Some people think that only sadness remains during the last years of our life. But I want you to know that is not so. I have reached the Autumn of my life. And I am feeling the joy of my priesthood.

I am free now from daily schedules, free to live each precious moment. Knowing that the past is done, and have no guarantee of another day on earth, I live in the present. I am free to respond to the call of the moment, reach out to the one to whom the Lord calls me. Listening to the feelings of my people who are feeling the sadness of growing old, sick, even dying, I can identify those feelings in myself. I think of the promise Jesus made, the promise to be with us when two or more are together in His name. Then I experience the joy of His presence. This is almost a daily experience.

Writing my love letter every day helps me to get in touch with my own sadness and helps me to listen better to all those whom I meet. While I listen, I think of the Suffering Jesus, and how He lives in us and feels with us. It is then that I feel His peace.

Though I may never present another Marriage Encounter Weekend, I carry with me the memories of almost thirty years with couples and priests who have touched my life. As I think of you, joy fills my heart.

I love you.

Fr. Bob McDonald, SM