



In the song of life there are of those who know the notes and those who sing the song. There are those who know “how things are supposed to be done.” They tend to be rigid. And there are those who live outside the box. They tend to be troublesome. There are those who try to walk a straight line and those who accept the wind that will blow them along many paths.

Recently listening to a quartet, I realized that what they were doing would never be duplicated. The story of each person from birth till now was being poured into the music as they met the story of the

composer's life. I was hearing those stories. There was a cat listening, and perhaps his story was also going into the mix of that magnificent experience.

The olive trees around me are beginning to blossom. Each one has a unique structure. I believe that there is something in this diversity that is essential for the wonderful oil that is produced.

It has been my responsibility a few times in my life to put together a team that would face very difficult tasks. I quickly learned University degrees did not matter. The life experience of each person was what mattered. Just like the olive trees, the differences often help produce the sweetest results. And, just like the quartet, that group of people could never duplicated.

Large religious institutions are often fixated on attempting to duplicate an experience. The result can be stagnation. More flexible spiritual thinkers sometimes refer to "the dynamics of the provisional." One 20th century Protestant monastic community, the Taizé Community, was so concerned about the problem of falling into the trap of duplicating past models that they destroyed all their records at the end of each year. The New Year started with a limitless horizon. I am sure that the Internal Revenue Service would not recommend this procedure! But it helped make that group of people constantly refreshed. Once a Pope (*John XXIII 1881-1963*) who himself was often discovered wandering outside the Catholic box, said of Taizé "*Ah, that little springtime!*"

Many years ago I was at a reading by a friend, the poet Robert Dun-

can (1919–1988.) A young person reacted to a poem. Robert asked, “What did you hear?” After listening carefully to the response, Robert said, “That's beautiful. It is not my poem. It is your poem — and it is good.”

Sometimes among the responses I gratefully receive from those of you reading these Friday Reflections are amazing ideas that are not mine. This is how our joint quest for finding the sacred in life should unfold. The world in which we live is in serious need of spiritual refreshing. Treasure your ideas. Let us try to make every patch of earth in which we live a “*little springtime.*”

Now, past the pliant willow tree, and back to the olive grove!

Brother Toby