



This is about lavender and the major problems of life and faith!

I believe both you and I have serious concerns for the challenges facing us. But July is a month to also find time to simply be at home on the earth! It helps to regain a perspective on our place in the universe and nothing does it as much as being mindful of the small patch of earth on which we live. My college professor friend, Jonah Raskin, once wrote while working on an organic farm,

I am digging my way to heaven!

Or, as the author of Psalm 84 put it,

*How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord, God of hosts.*

OK, but in God's dwelling place there is lavender. Dark English Lavender is on the East side of our chapel. It is beautiful, but it is the variety of lavender that is essential for the type of infused olive-oil balm that Sister Marti makes from a small amount of Sister Julie's olive oil. It is also the lavender Holly dries and uses to decorate the house and chapel, and weaves to be sold at our Christmas Faire. So every time I go to the chapel this patch of purple beauty has shrunk from the harvesting.

The bees and I are very sad. But this is something we must learn from nature, that everything in life is provisional.

We don't harvest the lighter-colored French Lavender from the West side of the chapel — partly because of my complaining. But, in time the blossoms fade, drop and rest for a year. So goes life, "*For everything there is a season*", so just get used to it!

However, in the corner of our rose garden are two clumps of a variety of Spanish Lavender, which seem to be out of step with their cousins. They are not as charming to look at, long green stalks with a few light purple blossoms. But they will be unchanged for many weeks. In life there is always something to be found on the margins which is out of step but a gateway to memories and to hope for the future. *Olé!*

Brother Toby

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Picture by Holly McCarroll-Baker