



A loaf of bread. An Elizabethan teenager. A couple of informal communities of “contemplative grandmothers.” And the rest of us!

Yes, the season of Lammas is once more upon us. In medieval agriculture this marked the end of the grain harvest. The time was filled with apprehension because despite all the effort that went into planning, planting, and caring, a sudden storm could destroy the crop. This would lead to a hungry winter with little bread.

Shakespeare, and other writers, pointed out that this was also a time to care for our emotional and spiritual growth. Juliet was born the night before Lammas. She died hours before her 14th birth-

day and was never to enjoy the harvest of her love for Romeo. Storm clouds are a threat to our plans at any age.

Bringing matters to the present, friends have shared with me experiences of seeking to be “grounded and connected to what is real and to what matters.”

People who live close to nature can feel that August is a time of transition. Neighbors around me are gathering harvests from gardens and the wild to store up for the winter. And, whether you are 14 or 114 these days before autumn are very important for taking stock on where we have been and where we want to go, especially if the world around us is changing.

A friend in her 90s, who no longer drives, lives close to the ocean but cannot reach it. In one way or another many of us find ourselves in this type of situation and must find ways of doing what she does; *“I listen to the wind in the trees and imagine that it is ocean waves.”* What we have once experienced is sometimes so rich that it never really fades. That is part of our harvest. Let us see that it is safely stored.

Now, for those of you who are closer to 14 than 114, take some moments in this nourishing month to put aside some experiences for your spiritual retirement account. No matter how young you are it is good to think about what you will really value from your life on the last day of your story.

Brother Toby