

From “Suddenly Springtime,” an intergenerational service for the Vernal Equinox on March 21, 2010

Welcome to Spring! No, really – it is officially spring, no matter what it looks like outside. Sometimes we wish we could just get through these days that aren’t warm and sunny. We’d like to just pretend they aren’t happening and wait to feel alive and excited when the next good weather comes along, but we are here, living, every day. Life doesn’t wait for good weather.

Mud Season by Gunilla Norris

The grass is intensely green next to patches of lingering snow. This is the time between—neither winter, nor spring. So much is invisible now, yet deep down there is a burgeoning, an unstoppable force.

The ground is saturated. Life teems below the surface. Right now, in this messy, volatile weather—one day warm, the next day freezing—a transition is happening. Can we trust our own confused, inner mud season as much as the one outside the window? Can we trust that what is not now visible in our lives will emerge one day?

Somewhere in the Talmud it is said that every blade of grass has its own angel whispering, “Grow. Grow!” Are we too sophisticated for angels, too proud to be helped? What would happen if we listened for that loving whisper meant for us?

Living so that we serve and bring honor to what we value most means we can’t just do nothing until the situation is right. Paying attention to what’s happening now, finding ways to love and live in every moment is part of living a religious and spiritually rich life.

We do this by watching what’s happening to people around us...are they in need of help? Of comfort? We do this by observing ourselves and our own actions. Are we behaving as know we should and treating everyone with respect? Are we treating ourselves well? Are we being kind and honest, loving and generous? Do we seek justice and offer mercy?

We also do this by paying attention to the rest of the world. We’re responsible to one another for our behavior and how our lives affect others, but we’re also responsible to the trees and flowers, the grass and the seas, the wind and the rain, to our pets and the wild animals, the birds and the frogs and the fish and all the insects. If we don’t pay attention to what is happening with them, we can forget that we’re in relationship with them, too!

The trees you walk by, the weeds that grow in the sidewalk, the bees and butterflies...they are part of our living family. New leaves and spring rains are something to smile at. I’ve even been

known to say hello to the new green shoots in my garden. It may seem silly, but I believe everything deserves to be noticed and loved.

In the reading, Norris asks us if we're too sophisticated for angels. I think we're not. No matter what else is happening, what else there is, we can be those angels for one another, for all that we love. We can be the loving whisper and listen for it, too.

I'd like you to learn a prayer with me – just a simple one, one that could be a wish or a promise, a hope or a certainty. It's a prayer that doesn't pretend to control what will happen or ask for things to be a certain way. It's a prayer that gardeners pray, and parents...businesspeople and ministers, too. It's a prayer that angels pray for each blade of grass and one that we know is being prayed for each of us by someone, sometime.

It's very simple, and one we can pray for just one small thing or for the whole of the world: each of us, whispering "Grow, Grow!"

We don't have to know how it will turn out...and that's the best prayer there is – the kind that trusts in goodness and possibility without pretending we know what's best all the time. So let's pray together...whispering "Grow! Grow!"

For the grasses and the flowers...grow! Grow!

For the creatures with whom we share this earth...grow! Grow!

For ourselves and for each other....grow! Grow!

For this congregation...grow! Grow!

For peace and for love....grow! Grow!

May it be so.