

## " SAY IT WITH FLOWERS "

( Scriptures : Matthew 6: 28-29 ; Ephesians 4:32 )

( Excerpts from Mother's Day Sermon over W.F.B.R. May 14, 1939 )

In the year 1917 the Society of American Florists advertised a campaign for a fitting slogan for their trade. Patrick F. O'Keefe happened to read the words of Bishop Coxé "Flowers are words that every one can understand," and the thought flashed into his mind; "Say it with Flowers." He won the award and that phrase has been a vital and dominating one. It is particularly significant on this Mother's Day, for we have learned to "say it with flowers" especially with the white carnation. Books have been written on "The Language of Flowers" and what they say is eminently worth while. In the Bible it is "said with flowers" in a manifold manner. In the Garden of Eden, as well as in the Garden of Gethseman flowers were present. Florial designs were carved into the woodwork in the temple. Jesus used flowers to illustrate some of the great truths of life. The lily seemed to be His favorite. He suggests to us, like the ancient Greeks, that life has the three elements in it, namely truth, beauty and goodness. All these are spoken with flowers.

Jesus used the lily to illustrate the truth that we should not worry in life, but we can trust God: for the Lord provides for the flowers on the field is surely going to care for the human soul he has placed on this earth. In Psalm 103 it is suggested that the flowers of the field are a symbol of failure, of the passing life. Jesus however, emphasizes the fact that "God will take care of you." Tennyson says; "Flower in the cranniod wall, I pluck you out of the crannies, I hold you root and all in my hand, Little flower-but if I can understand What you are root and all, I should know what God and man is. "God's message thru the flowers reveal to us the great truth that we can trust Him. The flowers are the "alphabet of angels" They ease the wearied mind, lighten dim eyes and bring enjoyment.

To "say it with flowers" as Jesus brings the thot before us is to sponor beauty in life. Carl Sandburg, great American poet defines poetry as "synthesis (bringing together) of biscuits and hyacinths." Jesus said the lilies do not spin or toil, yet they are better clothed than Solomon in all his glory. Biscuits are the rugged, common-place things of life, the whole wheat of life; while the hyacinths represent loveliness and beauty in life. The flowers grace the garden wall, breathe fragrance into the world and with their colors bewitch us. Some years ago strikers were marching thru the streets of a city bearing all kinds of banners. One of the banners had these words "We want bread and roses too." In life utility and beauty are needed. The poet Savage in his poem; "Seek not afar for beauty," puts it this way; "Seek not afar for beauty: lo, it glows in dew-wet grasses all about thy

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"Say it with flowers" and bring goodness into the world. Jesus exemplified that in His teachings and in His life. Paul says it in these words; "Be ye kind one to another." Goodness is made real as we say it with flowers, before people die. Do good as you have a chance, "And if life be but a passage, On that passage let us strew some flowers." Beautiful legend told about the origin of the flower mignonette. A young girl felt she had no beauty. So fairy came to her, as she found her weeping, and asked about her troubles. The girl said; "I am not beautiful." So the fairy told her; "Go out into the world and never let an hour pass without doing something to make someone happier and do not look into the mirror until I come back." The girl nursed the little flower, helped people, performed deeds of kindness and forgot all about her looks. The fairy came back, showed her her face in the mirror and said; "You are beautiful, for you have filled your mind and heart with good things and deeds. Like the flower mignonette which you have tended you will create a sweet atmosphere wherever you go." Make life more liveable thru love.