

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Yesterday, I was driving through Norwalk. As I frequently do, I noticed the pretty hanging baskets that are displayed throughout the village. The baskets are brimming with beautiful flowers! Many of the flowers are red or shades of pink. My eyes seem to be drawn to them every time I drive by. They are a welcome and happy sight!

A news article regarding flowers, also drew my attention this week. It is entitled, "'We just needed some extra happiness this year': Wisconsin farmer plants 2 million sunflowers (Jordyn Noennig, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 15, 2020). The Thompson Strawberry Farm in Bristol, Wisconsin (near Kenosha), decided to do something out of the ordinary this year. They planted sunflowers...2 million sunflowers on 22 acres of land! They did this to provide a place where people could go, walk the fields for as long as they wished, get a photo or several photos of themselves (selfie or group) by the sunflowers, and leave with one dozen sunflowers (per carload).

The sunflowers are intended to bring "extra happiness" to brighten people's day. They brighten people's day when persons are surrounded by so many sunflowers! They brighten people's day as the large numbers of sunflowers may almost seem to envelop them and draw them into a beautiful picture. They brighten people's day as the dozen sunflowers handed to them are distributed. They brighten people's day as they are handed out to those present, or later, to those who could not visit the farm. They brighten people's day as the photos taken of the sunflowers are sent via email, Facebook, etc... to others. In all these ways, the sunflowers simply brighten people's day!

At this time, we can appreciate in new and different ways seeing the flowers that God created for us to enjoy. We can appreciate the ways in which persons who plant and care for the flowers bring happiness into our lives. Whether through viewing sunflowers, or the beautiful flowers in Norwalk (lovingly watered and cared for by Barb Ornes), or the flowers in our own yards, or our neighbors' yards, or our villages, we are grateful for the "extra happiness" that flowers bring to us this year.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy