

Reflection by S. Romina Sapinosa, S.C.

I watched seeds in awe these past two weeks and how each little stem and first pair of leaves broke the ground above it and said hello to the world. They all look tiny, fragile and insignificant in the seemingly oversized raised bed but I expect that soon, each of them will claim their space filling that corner of the world with their life and bearing fruits for the nourishment of people and animals alike.

Those little seeds have the DNA of what they were made to be whether they were planted in the soil of a farm or in my lowly raised bed. The tomatoes will grow taller and produce sweet red fruit, the zucchini will start crawling on the ground and bear flowers. Their DNA, deeply implanted in every cell of their being, calls them forth to provide life and nourishment. Are we not just like them as Catholic Sisters planted in a world so hungry for the same?

Many of our congregations began just like those tiny fragile seeds. The many stories of religious sisters who came before us parallel those of these small, tiny seedlings who seem to know what to do even if they were “new” to the land or the corner of the world where they find themselves planted in. Catholic Sisters have an inner compass guiding them and allowing themselves to be directed by something much deeper than their own certainties and belief in their personal abilities and skills. Our Catholic faith and vocation is the DNA imprinted in every cell of our being calling us forth to be life and nourishment for our world. The reading on the works of mercy reminds us of the fruit that we are called to bear as Catholics and as women religious in this world - feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, counsel, comfort, pray. These are all part of who we are. The needs of the world are great in every generation and our DNA calls us to place ourselves in those areas of needs.

Like these seedlings that are dependent and able to survive because of other elements, so we, women religious, are dependent on our faith, our community of sisters and on God's mission. The DNA of community life is deeply embedded in us. Sisters built hospitals, schools, centers for those most marginalized never alone but always in collaboration and discernment with community. Our gifts and works are amplified and endure because we recognize our deep connection and interdependence on one another. Our community life and desire to move together farther albeit slower rather than faster but alone, makes us conscious of inclusivity, diversity and equity. It allows us to do the inner and community work needed despite the challenges. Our work and struggles to live, minister and pray together, though not perfect, serve as a powerful witness to an increasingly fractured world, so used to defining ourselves against the other.

And last but not least, I believe that Catholic sisters, deep within their DNA and their traditions, have the gift of dreaming up a future and a world that is a picture of God's Kindom. Our God is a God of beauty and dreams amidst the chaos and troubles we find our world saturated in. Young women do and will consider this life because they can recognize a wonderful dream and future to live into NOW. This Catholic Sisters Week, I invite all of us to rejoice and celebrate all that we were, all that we are and all we can and will be in this world, and live today with enthusiasm trusting that we have everything within us to know what step to take next and do it.