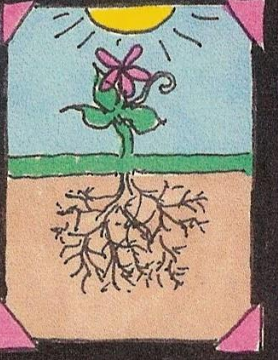
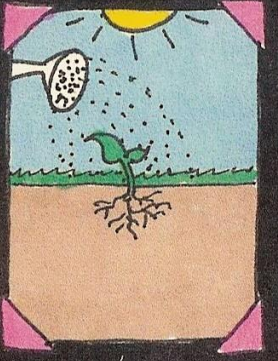
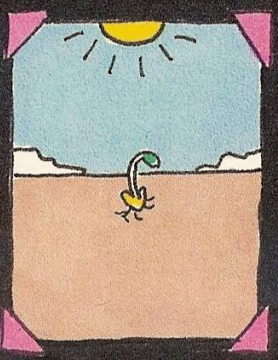
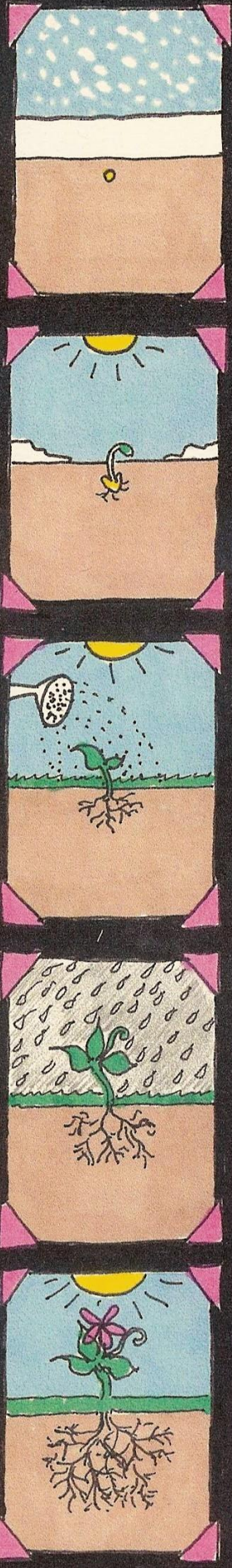


April 9

During Lent, we often limit our consumption of some particular item of food or drink as part of our spiritual practice. As human beings, however, we consume a lot more than just what goes into our mouths. As Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of god (Matthew 4:4). In other words, we are nourished (or not nourished) not only by food for our stomachs, but food for our spirits. As there are good foods and poisons for the body, so are there good foods and poisons for the spirit.

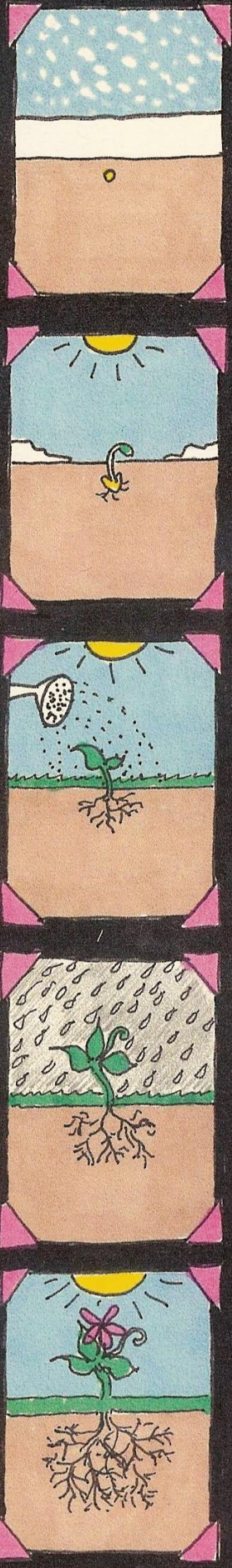
Thich Nhat Hanh, a peace activist once nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr. advises us to be mindful of these other kinds of consumption: "We are constantly consuming with our eyes, nose, tongue, ears, body, and with our mind consciousness...When





you read a novel or a newspaper, you are consuming; when you listen to music or a conversation, you are consuming; when you drive through the city and see and hear advertisements, these sense impressions are all objects of consumption. Sense impressions can be toxic if you are not mindful of them. Music can feed your seeds of craving, sorrow, and violence. The article you read can feed the energy of despair and hatred in you. Sights, sounds, ideas – they all belong to this second category of food... When a typical child in America finishes elementary school, she has watched about 100,000 acts of violence and 8,000 murders on television. This is too much. This means we and our children are consuming thoughts of violence, hatred, craving, and despair every day.”

Hanh concludes, “For our protection and that of our children, we should abstain from consuming these products that are toxic to our well-being.” Instead we can constantly try to place before



our senses things that will stimulate understanding and peace. I can turn off the TV and pick up a good book. I can flip off the ad that makes me fret about my weight or looks or house and go outdoors. I can feed myself fresh truth instead of empty opinions. First of all over Lent I can become more conscious of what I am consuming, and choose to avoid things that are not good for me.

This day, take note of what your senses are taking in and consider how you might give your spirit better nourishment.

Quotation above from Thich Nhat Hanh, Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World.



Jan Seabaugh

