

While major crops here in Illinois are corn, soybeans, and some wheat, now and then you drive past a field of sunflowers. The internet tells me sunflowers grow in all 50 states, but 75 percent of sunflowers grown for harvesting come from Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota. You know how the sunflower, like other flowers, follows the sun. Therein lies a little religious lesson.

Consider the distance between the sun and a sunflower. The giant sun is about 93 million miles away from that one, solitary sunflower. In many ways God is even more distant from us. The Most High “dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6:16). Does God care about little me, little you?

Still, the sun does reach across millions of miles to touch the sunflower. Why do we limit God’s coming to us to an hour in a building on Sunday? My thoughts these days are in the Old Testament, how it is filled with almost countless stories of God coming to mankind. “God in search of man” is how the Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel described the world around us.

The sunflower depends totally upon its source of life. Do we religious have eyes but not see? Do we worship with our lips, but our hearts are not always looking to Him? And what is central to Mission Central? It’s turning, which is what repentance means, turning ourselves and then working and giving so the Spirit can turn others to the Son. “God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). In His light, do we see light? (Psalm 36:9). “The whole earth is full of his glory! (Isaiah 6:3).

“Father, I will today / On Your love rely;
Let no evil thought / Cloud the clear blue sky.
Joyful and content / With life’s simpler things,
Knowing all I need / From Your kindness springs.”
(Lutheran Service Book 871:3)