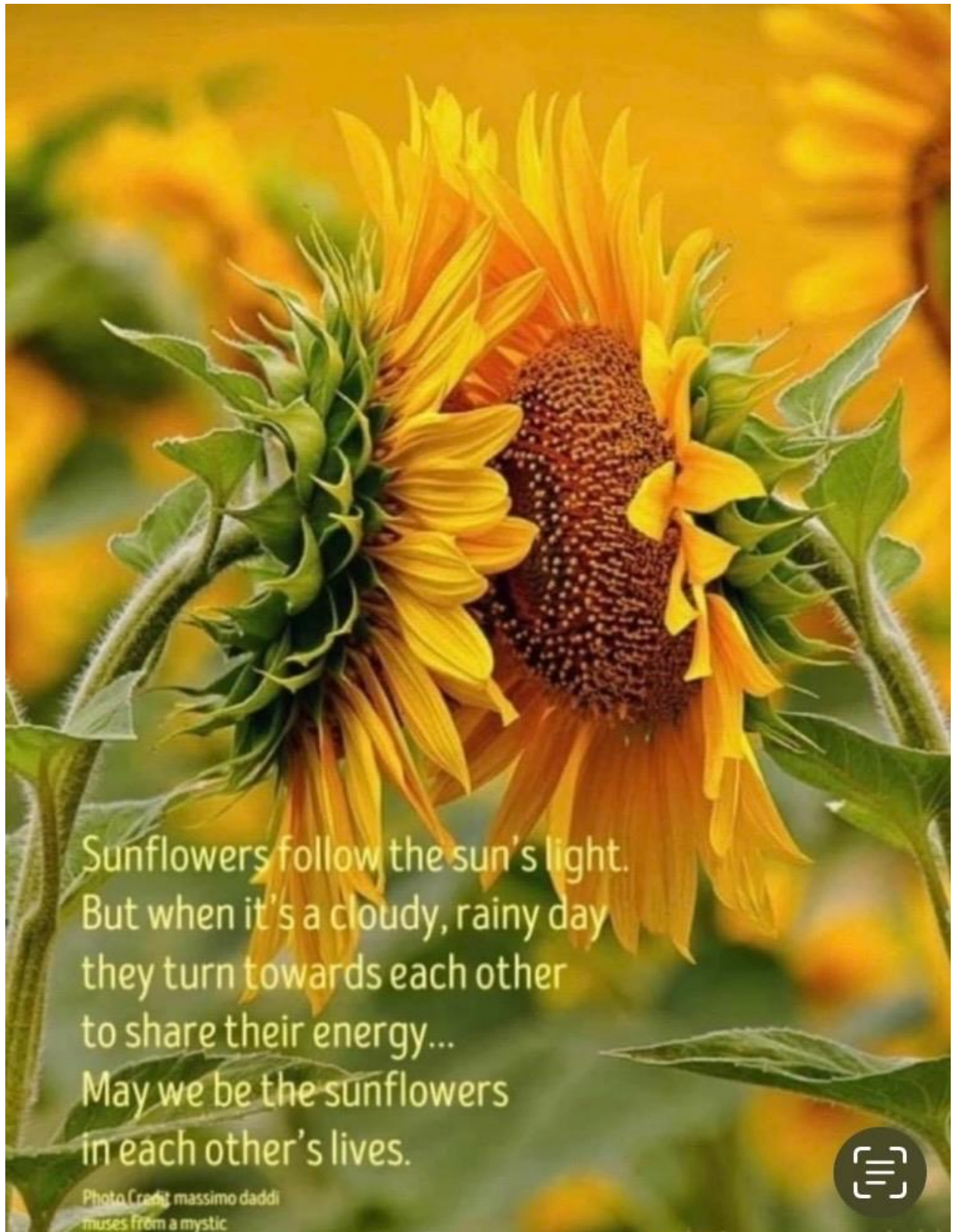


Sunflowers and Kindness



Sunflowers follow the sun's light.
But when it's a cloudy, rainy day
they turn towards each other
to share their energy...
May we be the sunflowers
in each other's lives.

Photo Credit massimo daddi
muses from a mystic



Dear Friends,

That is exactly what you've been! Sunflowers sharing your love and resources with those less fortunate. I'm so proud of my St. Gerard's parish family! First you showed *kindness* by supporting more than three persecuted Syrian families and now you are doing the same by sponsoring a Ukrainian mother, her three children and their grandmother! They will need our support and time to heal from the effects of all they've gone through.

In Ephesians, we read that we must be *kind* to one another. Kindness is defined as "the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate." You are demonstrating the love of God to those in need without seeking anything in return. Your kindness is making a considerable difference in this Ukrainian family's life.

As I've mentioned before, I can personally relate to what the Ukrainians are going through living with war. There's nothing more terrifying than living with the sound of bombs dropping nearby, living in constant fear and worrying about loved one's welfare when they are away from you.

War is hell! Any nation that wages war within itself or another nation is condemning itself to: massive death of its citizens, a poor economy, destruction, absence of peace, fear, ... you name it.

In Vietnam the civil war raged on for years leaving my country heartbroken, destroyed and in devastating poverty.

Poverty caused people to do whatever they could to survive, despite the fear of rockets and shelling that threatened to suddenly rain down on them. This poverty led to many beggars who did not have any other means to keep themselves alive. My family was somewhat blessed to have some rice to ward off starvation. When these beggars came to our house, my mother would never refuse to share some with them.

At St. Gerard's, our lives have been blessed in so many ways. We have not had wars to run away from. We have everything we need- including our loving families and community.

I also want to recognize the amazing work of our St. Vincent de Paul Society who have been faithfully and effectively putting our monetary donations to good use as they help so many needy people.

Our world is filled with people who need kindness. One of the fruits of the Spirit is kindness- something the parishioners at St. Gerard's have in abundance! The Spirit is moving all over, all over St. Gerard's Parish!

And also, thank you for helping me celebrate my 36 years as a priest! It was a fun get-together!!!

God bless you all!

Fr. Ignatius Tran