

A black and white photograph of a young child, likely a toddler, standing in a field of tall grass. The child is wearing a plaid dress over a short-sleeved shirt and a baseball cap. The child's right arm is extended forward, reaching out towards the horizon. The background is a soft-focus field of grass under a bright sky. A dark, curved shape at the top of the page suggests a page fold or a design element.

“Yes!”

“Jesus Christ was not ‘yes and no,’ but in him it was always ‘Yes.’ For in him every one of God’s promises is a ‘yes.’ For this reason, it is through him that we say the ‘Amen’ to the glory of God.”

2 Corinthians 1:19-20 (NRSV)

Yes” is the next step, rising to a new day, a fresh start. “Blessing” is another word for “yes.” So is “alleluia.” And saying “Amen.” Look up “yes” in the dictionary and you’ll see “adoption.” “Forgiveness.” “Baptism.” “A pat on the back.” “Lighting purple candles.”

Licking the bowl of chocolate frosting is a very small but very delicious taste of “yes.” Going the second mile is a big one; so is letting another person get the credit. Learning a new language is “Yes” with a capital “Y.” So is marriage. And attending the memorial service of someone who mattered deeply to you or to someone you love. “Yes” leaves the door open and the lights on.

You say “yes” when you plant winter lettuce, make good soup from Christmas dinner left-overs, recycle the tree, hang the thistle feeder for the finches, or eat black-eyed peas in the good tradition and promise of the new year.

You can clap your “yes” or sing it in a Christmas carol. Or give it away when you write a check to feed the hungry. “Yes” is rebuilding New Orleans, buying a goat for a family in Haiti, and supporting those who help in places we cannot go. “Yes” is Nobel Prizes for planting trees and micro-economics.

“Yes” pays attention. It stops to look and maybe take a picture when it’s astonished by the bare branches against the December sky. “Yes” shows up. It sees beyond today. “Yes” believes that the chemo is working. “Yes” is busy setting extra places at the table and writing birthday celebrations on next year’s calendar. “Yes” wants to enjoy every sandwich and dive into the deep end of the pool.

“Yes” mentors. It’s about believing in a high school student’s dreams. It writes letters of recommendation and sends invitations. “Yes” is all about leaving legacies and telling stories. “Yes” realizes you won’t get to do everything in your life, but, oh, how many you will!

When you start to cry when you hear, “It’s a boy!” or “It’s a girl!,” the tears are saying “yes.” When your heart skips a beat when all the candles are lit on Christmas Eve, that’s a “yes.” When a tree stuns you with its brilliant orange and all you can say is “oh, my!” you’re really saying “yes.” When you watch the Sand hill Cranes following their ancient migration route back home, you know that “Yes” is written into the whole fiber of the universe.

“Yes” is often a leap of faith. It’s what gets you up after you fall down. “Yes” drives as far as it can see with the headlights on then drives a little more. “This is not all there is,” whispers “Yes” when you’d be hard to convince that there’s more to life than you know right now. More than tears. More than Alzheimer’s. More than AIDS or war or loneliness or restlessness. “Yes” is more peace, more comfort, more light, more love, more hope.

“Yes” is wrapped in gratitude and overflowing in love. It’s committing fully to what your heart calls you to and giving priority to the One who matters.

“Yes” is the joy and fulfillment of Christmas. The light for the whole world on Epiphany and the grace of Lent. “Yes! Yes! Yes!” – a million times “Yes!” – resounds through the world on Easter.

But for today, like Mary, we kneel and allow ourselves to be open to God’s “yes” being born in us again this year.



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