

## Growing Our Faith - by Lorelei Pepe

When I lived in Miami, Florida I had a beautiful small garden right outside the front of my townhome. There also was a strong, sturdy old, oak tree in the center of it. Its branches hovered over my many bromeliad plants that I adored. There were over 60 and during certain times of the year they would bloom with a lovely red flower. They liked the heat and the more I dug them up and gave them away, the more I got back. They love the warm weather and sun. They needed very little care and grew by themselves it seemed.

My neighbor right next door hated the old oak tree because it was messy and the leaves would end up inside our homes. She wanted to even pay to have it cut down, but I was thrilled it was considered a historic tree and could not be cut down according to the county. I was so happy it was protected.

My garden brought me much joy and before I left Miami, for good, I gave more bromeliads away and a couple to my friend Melanie. Every year she sends me a photo of them blooming and it warms my heart.

Many of us, love to tend our gardens well and give them constant care. I get excited when I see new growth and believe it is a sign of God's love in nature. He plants the seeds there and within us as well. But it is up to us to nurture the garden as well as our holy spirit. In order to do that we must communicate with him daily and become immersed in our faith through prayer and scripture reading. I believe our great Lord will sustain us through all of life's difficulties. This teaches us to endure and have patience and most of all trust in him. In this way we can grow our faith and be confident in spreading that to others. I think we radiate God's love as we grow and mature. The holy spirit is planted in each one of us. We just have to recognize it. Plant your seed inside today and look to the Lord to satisfy all your needs in your heart.

Isaiah 61:3 - .....“so they will be called oaks of righteousness; the planting of the Lord that he may be glorified”.