

## Talent – a Natural Gift Cultivated Well



### “I am like an olive tree, growing in the house of God” – Psalm 52

Life is not about going through the motions from birth to death. Life is about the development of self to the point of unbridled joy. Life is about trusting our talents and following our gifts. But how? Olive trees hint at the answer even today.

Olive trees are very important and very meaningful image in Jewish literature. To the Jewish mind, to grow like “an olive tree” is no small thing. It isn’t easy to grow trees in the Middle East. Sand is hardly a conducive environment for forestry. Yet there is one wood that seems to thrive on the difficulty of the process. There is one tree with a natural talent for life in the middle of nowhere. The olive tree grows hardwood on barren ground, with little water, for a long, long time.

The olive tree has a talent for life. There are some olive trees in the Garden of Olives (Gethsemane – pictured), in fact, that scholars estimate were there the night of the Last Supper when Christ went there to pray. Startling isn’t it?

To “grow like an olive tree”, then, means to grow without much help, to grow hardy, to grow long and to grow on very little nourishment ...

Talent without the perseverance necessary to develop it is cheap. Too many people spend their lives talking about what they might have done if they had only stayed at something long enough to see it bear fruit.

Reference: Joan Chittister OSB: *Songs of the Heart – Reflections on The Psalms* (2011) John Garratt Publishing