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Happy Weakness (Fr. Michael Gillis)

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King Uzziah of Judah is, I think, most famous for his death, or the year of his death. The Prophet Isaiah in the year of King Uzziah's death had his famous vision of the Lord, highly exalted and sitting on a throne surrounded by cherubim with six wings ("with two they cover their feet, and with two they cover their face, and with two they fly"), who cried out ceaselessly, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

King Uzziah was a good king of Judah, one who "did what was right in the sight of the Lord." A particularly intriguing verse in the story of his early life says that "he loved the soil." King Uzziah devoted many public works to improving the land: digging wells in the desert and planting vineyards in the mountains.

I think when my wife dies, she will be remembered as one who loved the soil. I'll be remembered as one who loved his wife and so helped with the soil.

It says of King Uzziah that he was "marvelously" helped by the Lord, until he became strong. When he became strong, it says that "his heart became proud to his own destruction." In his pride, King Uzziah entered the temple of God to offer incense, which only a priest should do; and when he resisted the remonstrance of the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead. He spent the rest of his long life

living in a separate house, apart from his family and his people.

Isn't that the way it is? Isn't that the fruit of pride: separation from those you love and those who love you?



When we are weak, God's help in our life is "marvelous." The most dangerous position is one of strength, in war, in argument, in religion, in business, in anything. The strong are preparing for a fall. The weak are hoping in God. Perhaps that's why the psalmist continually reminds God and himself (which, in prayer, is the same thing) that he is poor and needy.

And really, any illusion of strength or of being right or of having it under control is really just that: an illusion. But illusions are so appealing, all gain and no pain.

Nevertheless, pain is necessary. It's the reality check. It reminds us that we are dependent, that we are weak, that we have nothing to feel triumphant about over against our brother or sister—no matter how right we seem and how wrong they seem to be.

Oh the happiness of weakness, of loving the soil (or loving someone who loves the soil) and of watching God act marvelously in our lives.

By Fr. Michael Gillis

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