

## Reflection for Wednesday, May 5, 2021

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Dare I say it? “Happy Spring!” One remains cautious about *absolute* statements when in two weeks we have had a snowstorm and 80 degrees. We’re wondering about the magnolia tree and all the tender new green shoots pushing up the soil. Will they survive? Hopefully, yet we have to *wait and see* as the weeks go on.

We remain *tentative* knowing the limits of all things earthly. So wisely, we generally do not talk in absolutes, yet in the Gospels Jesus seems to have no trouble doing so!

So in case we didn’t quite get it all, the Gospel from Sunday is repeated for us today. Jesus’ promise is strong: “Whoever remains in me and I in them **will** bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. ... If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want, and it **will** be done for you.”

Evidently the disciples believed Jesus’ promise and acted on it. As we heard, “Paul and Barnabas ... were sent ... by the Church and passed through Phoenicia and Samaria telling of the conversion of the Gentiles and brought great joy to all the brethren.”

So, now that it is more than a month after Easter, are you resurrected? We know the phenomenon of the Resurrection appearances, when the people, even those nearest to him, did not recognize Jesus right away. It seems *until* they could see with *new* eyes, until they could *feel* the fire burning within them, they could not recognize him. And it seems, they could not witness or bear fruit either.

Ronald Rolheiser’s book, *The Passion and the Cross*, has a great chapter on the resurrection. He suggests that each of us goes through this pattern and not only once. He notes that “in those areas of our lives where we bear God’s image the most perfectly, where we are most ... sensitive and most special, that, invariably, is where we get crucified. What’s calloused, tough, and homogenized, survives ... helping us to go through the motions of life. ... But what is most precious in us ends up in a tomb: a dream crucified ... a winter set in ... (till) Nothing can surprise us anymore. ...

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So we live on, far from fully alive. There is darkness at the end of the tunnel, save for one thing: spring and resurrection ... nature and we are given the opportunity to unthaw, to resurrect.”

Rolheiser tells about receiving an Easter card one year that simply said, “May you leave behind you a string of empty tombs!”

“That’s the challenge of Easter, (he says): to resurrect *daily*, to leave behind us a string of empty tombs ... so that, *like Christ*, our lives will radiate the truth that, *in the end*, everything *is* good, reality *can* be trusted. Love *does* triumph over apathy and hatred ... togetherness over loneliness ... and forgiveness over bitterness.

We need regular resurrections.

Nature – all of it, including ourselves – is incredibly resilient, incredibly resurrectable. Given any chance, life bursts forth from what once appeared to be dead. May we all “leave behind us a string of empty tombs.”

Remember: “Whoever remains in me and I in them *will* bear much fruit.” But first we have to believe this truth, despite all appearances: good *will* eventually triumph, there *is* a fire in our hearts. God as Love has the final word. ARISE!

What in me is hearing that call to *come alive*, today?

Rolheiser, Ronald, *The Passion and the Cross* (Franciscan Media, 2015), 89-91