



Extract from Richard Rohr:

I believe the Christian faith is saying that *the* pattern of transformation is always *death transformed*, not *death avoided*. The universal spiritual pattern is death *and* resurrection, or loss *and* renewal, if you prefer. That is always a disappointment to humans, because we want one without the other—transformation without cost or surrender.

We ordinarily learn to submit and surrender to this scary pattern only when reality demands it of us, as it is doing now. Christians are helped by the fact that Jesus literally submitted to it and came out more than okay. Jesus is our guide, the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith,” as the Letter to the Hebrews puts it (12:2). Each time we surrender, each time we trust the dying, we are led to a deeper level. We are grounded for a while, like an electric wire, so there is less resistance and more available energy to trust it the next time. Yet it is still invariably a leap of faith, a walk through some degree of darkness.

There is something essential that we only know by dying. We really don’t know what life is until we know what death is. Divine Life is so big, so deep, and so indestructible, that it is able to include death. In an article entitled “Hope in a Time of Crisis,” Franciscan sister and scientist Ilia Delio wrote:

Christianity can help us realize that death and resurrection are part of the evolutionary path toward wholeness; letting go of isolated existence for the sake of deeper union. Something dies but something new is born—which is why the chaos of our times is, in a strange way,

a sign of hope; something new is being born within. Out of chaos, a star is born. Breakdown can be breakthrough if we recognize a new pattern of life struggling to emerge.

We may find Ilia's words challenging but I hope we also find them encouraging—reminding us to look for new signs of life and new ways of being, today and in the days to come.

Fluent

I would love to live
Like a river flows,
Carried by the surprise
Of its own unfolding.

~ John O'Donohue~

A Reflection by Matthew Fox

The *How* and the *What* of the Resurrection story are the source of great debate for Christian scholars and believers and even whole denominations now and over the centuries, and of course for non-Christians as well. “Was there a body? Was it real or a ghost? Was there an empty tomb? Why are the post-resurrections stories of his appearances so diverse? Is it factual or symbolic?” etc. etc.

What cannot be debated however about the Easter story is the *Why* of the resurrection. The human species has always been concerned and curious about death and what happens after we die. This curiosity goes back to the earliest evidence we have where humans took special care to bury their dead as if for a great journey. Indeed, cultural historian and psychologist Otto Rank developed an entire understanding of the human race being a *history of the quest for immortality*. (In fact, he defines the “soul” as our quest for immortality.)

Rank, who was a Jew and not a Christian, nevertheless said this about Easter: The Resurrection as taught by Jesus and Paul presents us with “*the most revolutionary idea in human history.*” Why? Because it democratizes immortality and thus ‘cures’ humanity of its number one preoccupation: The fear of death. Now, he says, humanity can let go of compulsive militarism, consumerism, pyramid building, fame hunting, power gathering...*and live. Live fully. Live beyond the fear of death.*

Moving beyond the fear of death is resurrection; it allows us to choose to live simply and not in a mood of rapacious pursuit of false idols of immortality that require the plundering of Mother Earth and the killing of future generations and the extinction of other species to achieve its goals, goals that are folly and not wisdom. Might this be the story of Easter 2020?

God, help us
to live slowly, to move simply, to look softly,
to allow emptiness, to let the heart create for us.
Amen

Blessings

Elaine

