

Pastoral Reflection
Easter Sunday, 2022

[Rise up] O sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead.
Rise up, work of my hands, for you were created in my image.
Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you.
Together . . . we cannot be separated! [1]

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 her March Newsletter from The Omega Center, 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 break through 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.

Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM

References:

[1] Adapted from an ancient Christian homily, *Days of the Lord: Easter Triduum*, (Liturgical Press: 1993), 36.

[2] Delio, Ilia. 2020. “Dear God,” *The Omega Center*, March 16, 2020, <https://omegacenter.info/dear-god/>

Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Just This* (CAC Publishing: 2017), 79.