

Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations

From the Center for Action and Contemplation

Week Sixteen: Resurrection

God Is with Us through It All

Father Richard shares how we can receive the miracle of new life by embracing our own difficulties and "deaths" as Jesus did.

Death is not only physical dying. Death also means going to the full depths of things, hitting the bottom, going beyond where we're in control. In that sense, we all go through many deaths in our lives, tipping points when we have to ask, *"What am I going to do?"* Many people turn bitter, look for someone to blame, and close down. Their "death" is indeed death for them because there is no room for growth after that. But when we go into the full depths and death of anything—even, ironically, the depths of our own sin—we can come out the other side transformed, more alive, more open, more forgiving of ourselves and others. And when we come out the other side, we know that we've been led there. We're not holding on; we're being held by a larger force, by a larger source that is not our own. That's what it means to be saved! It means that we've walked through the mystery of transformation.

The miracle of it all—if we are to speak of miracles—is that God has found the most ingenious way to transform the human soul. God uses the very thing that would normally destroy us—the tragic, the sorrowful, the painful, the unjust deaths that lead us all to the bottom of our lives—to transform us. There it is, in one sentence. Are we prepared to trust that?

Jesus' death and resurrection is a statement of how reality works all the time and everywhere. He teaches us that there's a different way to live with our pain, our sadness, and our suffering. We can say, "Woe is me," and feel sorry for ourselves, or we can say, "God is even in this." And that's what Jesus did on Good Friday.

None of us crosses over this gap from death to new life by our own effort, our own merit, our own purity, or our own perfection. Each of us—from pope to president, from princess to peasant—is carried across by unearned grace. Worthiness is never the ticket, only deep desire. With that desire the tomb is always, finally empty, as Mary Magdalene discovered on Easter morning. Death cannot win. We're finally indestructible when we recognize that the thing which could destroy us is the very thing that could enlighten us.

Friends, the Easter feast is a reminder to all of us to open our eyes and our ears and to witness what is happening all around us, all the time, everywhere. God's one and only job description is to turn death into life. That's what God does with every new springtime, every new life, every new season, every new anything. God is the one who always turns death into life, and no one who trusts in this God will ever be put to shame (Psalm 25:3).