

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

By Ken Woodley

He is risen.

Jesus, the great gardener of souls—capable of transforming the most wintered of life's landscapes into spring—has bloomed and blossomed out of the grave. No wonder Mary Magdalene mistook him for the gardener when she went to his tomb in the pre-dawn darkness.

How appropriate that we at St. Anne's flower the cross every Easter morning.

Just as nature pulls spring out of winter's hat, like a magician—so an Easter bunny is an apt symbol, after all—Jesus turned death inside out and upside down.

And now he stands there, outside our own tomb, reaching out to place flowers on whatever cross life has nailed us to, to turn the nails into petals.

Few people live an entire life without enduring some sense of crucifixion, however momentary it may be.

No, there are no literal nails, no actual hammers. Roman soldiers have not made a crown of thorns for our head.

But it is not blasphemy to have a glimpse of understanding toward the horror that Jesus endured based on moments when life for us became really, really dark, very, very painful and extremely frightening.

Jesus, the great gardener of our soul, is there now. Is here now on Easter Day. Sharing Easter Day with us. Offering a sense of resurrection right here and right now.

Jesus knows.

Jesus understands.

And that is why he stands there, outside our tomb. He has rolled the stone away. He is stepping inside. Reaching out his hand to us.

Where we feel barren, he can sow any crop and the harvest day will come.

Where our limbs feel bare, he can bring leaves budding.

Birdsong in our silence.

Light washing our shadows away.

A sky so blue it sticks to our eyes even in the darkness, which suddenly doesn't seem so dark anymore.

We all get wintered by life at one time or another. The seasons of life come and go, like tides, but Jesus will never fall away from our tree like dried leaves for which summer is barely a memory and spring is no more.

Love and grace are perpetual blossoms and blooms.

It is Easter Day, and we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

It is Easter Day, and Jesus celebrates the resurrection of us all into new life in the hereafter but also in the here and now.

Not THE resurrection for all eternity.

Not yet.

But a resurrection for today and tomorrow until eternity comes.

That is the prayer we hear Jesus whispering in our heart and in our soul.

The cure we most need may have to wait for heaven, but the healing we need is here now. Jesus is reaching out his hand to lead us away from our grave and walk with us away from our tomb so that we may experience the wonder of the flowers that suddenly surround us.

Jesus, the great gardener of our souls, offers to keep the weeds from consuming the petals he promises are inside us.

And he offers another promise, too.

Easter Day is not just this Sunday. Easter Day doesn't die at sunset. Easter Day is not buried as the dark of night returns. Easter Day lives on and on and on because every day offers us resurrected moments in the garden with Jesus.

Just when it seems the winters of our life won't ever let us go, there are sudden daffodils in us all.

Just where God put them.

