

Pastor's Column

Rev. Michael Ratajczak
michaelr@stmoside.org
758-4100 x100

“The Holy Longing—Part II”

(Fr. Ron Rolheiser begins his book, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*, with a poem, “The Holy Longing,” by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

In April, I invited parishioners to share their thoughts as to how this poem spoke to them.

Enjoy the many and diverse thoughts! May they help you in your daily prayer and reflection.)

“The Holy Longing”

*“Tell a wise person, or else keep silent,
Because the massman will mock it right away.
I praise what is truly alive,
what longs to be burned to death.*

*In the calm water of the love-nights,
where you were begotten, where you have begotten,
a strange feeling comes over you
when you see the silent candle burning.*

*Now you are no longer caught
in the obsession with darkness,
and a desire for higher love-making
sweeps you upward.*

*Distance does not make you falter,
now, arriving in magic, flying
and finally, insane for the light,
you are the butterfly and you are gone.*

*And so long as you haven't experienced
this: to die and so to grow,
you are only a troubled guest
on the dark earth.*

Suzee Irwin responded to this poem with her own poem:

Blessed Consummation

As much as I loath being mocked,
stronger still is the force of the flame.

In the wee hours, I am pulled as if taffy when hot.
But I cool quickly, am fragile and easily broken.

But what is this?
I long still. I long for a long time. I long longingly.

Tug, nudge, push, pull.
It won't cease.

I stretch closer with caution, wondering.
As I do, the flame gets warmer, it almost burns.
The light is brighter.
I shield my eyes.

What does it mean? I cool. I sleep.
I curl into myself. Covered with “busyness,”
I let myself be attracted to false flames.
Funny, they leave me cold.

Day by night by day by night I am drawn.
Age brings wisdom. Wisdom enables courage.
Am I willing to burst this shell, this confinement?
It is comfortable here!

But, oh God! Your light and warmth entice me.
I am on the verge. I pray.

Metamorphosis, metanoia, transformation, I want you.
I want to be consumed in His brilliance and light. Will it hurt?
I fly.