

Pastor's Column

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"The Holy Longing—Part IV"

(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.*

Masako Streling writes: I pray privately every day that I may live passionately like St. Paul. His heart was burning with the flame of Jesus until others extinguished his light. He was not afraid of "massman." He never kept silent about the truth.

I pray every day that my Master, Jesus, helps me to be freed from my own self-induced imprisonment of the "darkness" of pride, which prevents me to forgive myself as well as others, a pride

which seeks revenge or at least desires to get even with others who hurt my pride in seeking the approval of others. Such obsessions with living with darkness I no longer wish and I would like a divorce!

I no longer blame others for my own unhappiness or give credit to others for my happiness. I want to be free from the cocoon of ugliness and instead be a beautiful butterfly of new freedom, being the new woman that my Master promised not too long ago.

I see in the corner of my eye the silent candle burning like a beckoning of an invitation to the Kingdom of God. The only thing the invitation asks of me, says my Master, is that I hunger for God. Yet there is a price, says my Master; I must die and then grow lest I am only a troubled guest on the dark earth.

I celebrate Eucharist with my priest, with my beloved husband, Carl, with my Faith Community, and with my friends. In this Eucharist, I am nourished and encouraged to be worthy, living another new day, and so too, to serve others. How else can I repay my Master for all that he has given me? After all, I am Japanese and was born into a culture which taught me not to owe anything to anyone, but to your God.

I pray that some day I will not be obsessed by my own darkness, and I pray to receive the grace for a "mellowness of Spirit," which enables me to walk the miles to do good so that distance does not become an obstacle. I am God's daughter, in the calm water of the love-nights, he has begotten me.

We talk about peace on Earth. But how many are willing to work for justice? It has been said that in order to achieve peace, you must first work for justice. It costs! You might lose your popularity, maybe, even your life. History demonstrates that prophets do not live a normal life span. No disciples of Jesus, except one, lived a normal life span either. All died of martyrdom.

Who is the twenty-first century prophet? Will he/she lead us to the "Spirituality for the New Millennium" based on stewardship? Will he/she be able to teach the poor to fish? They need to know self-worth. I need to follow!