

## Pastor's Column

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### “The Holy Longing—Part VII”

(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.*

**Chris Smith** reflects: Life is an interesting melting pot of people, situations, challenges, rewards and disappointments. This poem presents a wonderful view of how to handle these things during our lifetime.

Some people are fortunate enough to know “What they want to be when they grow up” at a very young age. Others are not and are challenged to come up with “something—the correct answer” when that question is asked in grammar school. Though I have been a very driven person from my earliest memories, my

thoughts at that age were only of doing the best I could with each day of my life. I came up with an answer that I thought would be acceptable, only to have it mocked by some. “Tell a wise person, or else keep silent...”

This actually served to strengthen my resolve to one day become someone who would make a positive difference in life. It was an impetus that sustained me during future situations, the meaning of which I didn't understand until much later. “Distance does not make you falter, now, arriving in magic...”

The magic was Faith and the instinctive knowledge that God had a plan for me.

As life presented challenges, keeping sight of “...the silent candle burning” gave me the strength to endure and the momentum to move forward. Always, during these times, God sent someone with an encouraging word, smile or simply the reminder of the gift of Hope.

Over time I found myself becoming more “the butterfly” drawn to the light and realizing it was all around me. I simply had to open my eyes to see it.

Since then difficult situations became opportunities. It is through these that we grow and give of ourselves as God intends. Each of us is here for a purpose.

Only through dying and so growing, do we truly appreciate life as we know it. Every challenge in life is an opportunity to “sweep upward” and not be a “troubled guest on the dark earth.”

Life is a gift. It is not always easy, but I appreciate the lessons now for what they provide, which is growth. Without it, there is no point—a wasted life, void of accomplishment.

Buddhist monks are said to pray for trouble in their lives to promote spiritual growth. I'm not advanced enough spiritually to request trouble in my life, nor in the lives of others, however challenges are a constant.

The knowledge that Resurrection follows death for us as believers, gives life—and all of the challenges that come with it—a purpose. The ‘light’ is ‘love’ and that makes life worth living!