

## **Remember the Vision; Embracing the Dream**

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There are three ancient insights that may best explain the challenge of this anniversary moment --a moment that marks the time from the beginning of this journey to renewal but a moment that does not, if we're honest, really feel like its end. We know these stories well. They touch in us both the excitement and the tension of the time, they warn us of the difference between the shaping of a vision and the embracing of a dream. The Zen masters tell us that once upon a time in the rainiest part of the rainy season, an old monastic began her pilgrimage to the holiest shrine on the holiest mountain in the land. Forced back by fierce winds and driving rain, she stopped at the foot of the incline to check directions one last time. 'old woman,' the inn master scoffed, "this mountain is deep in wet and running clay." You cannot possibly climb this mountain now. "oh, sir," the old monastic said, "the climb to this shrine will be no problem whatsoever. You see, my heart has been there all my life. Now it is simply a matter of taking my body there, as well."

Point: there is some summit toward which every life is bent. All we really need is to find the faith it will take to complete the journey.

The second story about the difference between a vision and the embracing of a dream is one of our own.

In the book of numbers the scripture reads, "and Moses told the spies 'go up into the hill country and see what this land and people are like...'"

Finally the spies returned saying, "We came to the land to which you sent us. And it flows with milk and honey." Hearing this, Joshua said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it..." But some said, "We are not able to go up against this people they are stronger than we are. Even to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers... And so we seemed to them." Then, the whole congregation cried out: "Would it not have been better to have died in Egypt? Would it not be better for us to go back?"

At the end of his life Moses explains to the community of Israelites the crux of the problem. "The Lord God....told us to go up," he says, "but you would not go." "So," he tells them, "even with me for defending you the Lord was angry saying, 'You also shall not enter there. Joshua shall enter...your children shall enter there...but as for you,' Moses tells them after 40 years in the desert, 'as for you--journey back into the wilderness, in the direction of the red sea.'"

Point: the dream of living in the Promised Land is not guaranteed simply because it was promised in the vision. To bring a vision to reality, the dream must be embraced.

Finally, the roman philosopher Boethius teaches us: "every age that is dying is simply another age coming to life." But is it? We are at a crossroads, too.

Moses and the chosen people wandered for 40 years. By then, the people who had left Egypt young were well into their old age. By then, the excitement of the journey had too often turned to grumbling or to fear, to nostalgia for the past or, worse, to the sense of doubt about the future. Egypt—unfriendly, enslaving Egypt—looked better to them than the risk of Canaan's newness. By then, the great, glorious exodus—with its plagues and its promises, its reorganization and its renewal as a people had begun to look futile and the future forsaken. By then the energy of beginning with which they had started their journey was gone. And in its place was desolation or the seductions of dailiness.

How did that happen? And what does that have to say to us about our own great vision of renewal and its now barely dawning dream? And what does it have to do with religious as religious, with religious leaders as leaders in a time on the brink— but not yet?

Before we even attempt to determine how and where we fit in the transition from shaping a new vision of religious life to embracing the dream of renewal it may help to consider the very nature of social change itself in a period that is hectic and unstable and overwhelming and whirling with change.

From 1960 - 2006, the era that has formed the spiritual givens of western culture today the very pillars of society have shifted:

1. In this period, we have experienced major shifts in the Western belief-value system. Family patterns have changed; sex roles have changed and governments that talked freedom and justice and human rights have been riven with one corruption after another and so became daily less and less credible.

2. The most dramatic transformation of world view that has ever taken place in human history has taken place in your lifetime and mine. John Glenn, first American astronaut, took -- from outer space — the first picture of the planet that had ever been taken, with a \$45.00 camera that he bought at the local drugstore the night before the trip. Up until that moment the human view of earth and its place in the universe had never been anything but theory and speculation and educated calculations. Up until that moment you and I knew where we lived only on the basis of artistic guesses. Now for the first time in history we could really see ourselves -- in all our grandeur, and in all our smallness -- and all our old certainties evaporated into questions.

3. This generation, too, saw scientific "progress" that was often more threat than help: in these few years, science has changed life, changed death; changed family, changed sex; changed human communication from months to nanoseconds; changed military conflict from struggle to human annihilation. Changed human conception from wombs to petri dishes, and changed human creation from critically unique, to cloned, until, finally, science has managed, to confuse the moral, the immoral and the amoral to change the very meaning of "meaning."

4. In this era military security became our highest priority, our greatest expenditure, and our scarcest commodity.

5. Thanks to our “military security,” we created the end of the world and we stored it in the corn-fields of Kansas. We produced remote controlled machines to kill people we did not know and could not see. And now finally we have begun to erode civil rights for citizens here and to torture the citizens of other nations.

6. In this same time frame integration –Blacks, Hispanics, Indians, Inuits-- challenged white supremacy. And feminism challenged the white male system and even the white male god.

7. And great poverty in the midst of great affluence -- the working poor – 20% of the population who work full time for less than full-time pay, and the 6 million who work two full time jobs without benefit of benefits -- challenge all the American myths ever made about fair play, and “freedom and justice for all.”

Clearly social change is reshaping every institution in this society—including our own. What are we to make of that?

To understand what we ourselves are going through as we attempt to maintain a vision and achieve a dream it may be necessary to look first at the process of social change as it operates in any institution, in any culture.

Anthropologist Anthony F.C. Wallace teaches that major transformations of thought and behavior happen when society discovers that its once common religious and cultural understandings have become impossible to sustain. At that moment that society begins to undergo a "revitalization movement" of four major stages-- whether it realizes it or not, whether it wants it or not.

Stage one is a period of serious individual stress. In this stage people, alone and silently, begin to question values they had always taken for granted. And they start to establish new patterns of thought and behaviors. What the generation before them took for granted -- for instance, like mixed marriages, divorce, birth control, segregation, nuclear weapons, homosexuality, the ordination of women, capital punishment, in vitro fertilization, cloning, stem cell research or, in our case, cloister and companions, ministries and permissions, spiritual childhood that had become childish obedience, church, conscience, community, male pronouns, and ecclesial exclusion -- they begin to debate and discard. Clearly, consensus on group values and norms had broken down. The notion of what it meant to be a woman religious had begun to shift.

In stage two of the process of social change there is alienation everywhere! Wide-reaching social stress becomes apparent, what we once called “our culture” -- or our customs or even our community is now barely recognizable. And people begin to decide that their problems aren't personal. They're not the insane ones. Others feel the same way they do -- insanity itself has become the norm! And groups form and organizations grow as people cluster around these newly emerging ideas. Suddenly, we have NCAN and NAWR and sister formation groups, chapter committees and sisters'

senates, peace and justice programs and private retreats, prayer groups rather than community prayer! Anti-war demonstrations and nuns— God help us--in jail! Then, people decide, the problems of the day-- personal, public and political-- are a result of failure in the anchor institutions they had always depended on for stability and direction: and they set out to do it themselves. Churches are out of tune with human needs, they say; convents are remote from the real questions of life, they feel; the government is corrupt -- and corrupting, we hear. And suddenly there is political rebellion in the institutions, demonstrations on the streets, and schism in the churches. And people set out to do it themselves.

Then, in stage three of a revitalization process people agree there is a problem but they can't agree on how to cope with it. Some want to change the system; others want to send in the troops and get the old system back in order. Then the two groups quarrel and divide and they both blame authority. Then, inevitably, a nativist or traditionalist movement arises. Nativists argue that the danger has come from the failure of the people to adhere more strictly to old beliefs and values and behavior patterns. They want to do more of the same-old, same-old but do it better.

They want the "old time religion" and they find scapegoats aplenty. Like the Israelites before them, at that point they too refuse to go ahead, to go on. The church would be all right if it weren't for Vatican II, they argue. Religious life would be all right, they say, if nuns wore uniforms. Marriages would be all right if it weren't for feminism, they say, and the country would be fine if it weren't for labor unions or liberalism or Blacks or Arabs or immigrants or Koreans or Khaddifi or Hussein or Gloria Steinem or whoever or whatever is the convenient scapegoat today.

In the fourth and final stage of a revitalization movement, comes the emergence of a new world-view and the restructuring of old institutions to enable it. But how? In simpler societies, leadership for this rebuilding of society usually came from a single charismatic person. "And Moses intervened," Psalm 89 reminds us, "and you, O God, turned aside your destruction." In more complex cultures, like our own, however, multiple spokespersons -- many leaders, a chorus of voices -- are needed to lead the people to new understandings about old values. The role of these spiritual leaders is not to repudiate the older world-view entirely, but to shed new light on it so that it can be understood that God's Spirit always manifests itself in new ways to meet new needs. Then, flexible people begin to understand and experiment and the movement from death to life -- of an entire people begins to happen. Then, the Promised Land in sight, at long last, at long last, they begin to move into it with confidence. But finally, Wallace points out, not the older generation not the spiritual wanderers in whom still lives the old ideas and values of an earlier age will lead today's institutions to newness! No, Wallace says, it will be the generation that "grew up with" the emerging insights -- who never lived in the old world; who spent their lives wandering in the desert, and knew no other that come to maturity with whole new notions of what must be done -- and venture to create for themselves a new life in a new land.

Then, the old institutions find themselves with new leadership. And the institutions are restructured. But only under one condition. Only provided -- (listen carefully!) -- that someone-- the older generation -- brings them up with the new questions, encourages

the new responses, prods them to continuing risks and the new insights that make for new life in the Promised Land. The question for us, then, is whether or not we ourselves are committed to completing the journey.

Are we seeding the future in the hearts of those who will come after us or are we, down deep, intent ourselves on stopping where we are, shaping things up, and, little by little, going back into the wilderness, “back in the direction of the Red Sea?” Where it’s familiar, where it’s clear, where it’s ours to control? Will we go on now – or, in sight of the Promised Land - -balk as Israel did? Aware of the vision but unwilling to do what it takes to embrace the dream? No doubt about it, Exodus is a template for our own times. The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years, the Book of Chronicles tells us “until the older generation died out...” Until the old ideas of how life ought to be and was meant to be -- in another age, in another world-- had literally ‘died out.’ So what does that have to do with us? Well, Vatican Council II, the new vision of both religious life and the church, ended at the dawn of 1966 and the quest for the dream began.

We too, in other words, have been wandering in our own desert for 40 years, sending out ‘spies’ that we called experimentations, hearing the reports and watching the results. In the course of it, we built important altars along the way: soup kitchens and half-way houses, prison chaplaincies and retreat work, hospitality centers and housing projects, peace centers and justice programs, associate programs and ecumenical work. But now we are at the point, where we are the ones who must decide whether or not in this wild, teeming, starving, dying world we will go on toward newness of life or go back to concentrating on ourselves again rather than on the new world emerging around us, and calling us forward.

1966, the end of Vatican II, plus 40 years of desert time is 2006. August of 2006! This anniversary of the ending of Vatican II, is the first year of the rest of our religious lives-- the moment, perhaps, for which like the Israelites in the desert, we were born, so that the vision can be reaffirmed, so that the dream can be realized, so that the people can be saved. It is time for us to start again toward the Promised Land. It is time to stop balking. It is time to complete the journey up the mountain of faith. But what was the vision toward which we were drawn and what will it take of us now to embrace the dream?

Vatican II was the vision. It was a vision of participation in decision-making, of community rather than hierarchical monarchy. Of involvement in the pain of the world rather than withdrawal from the struggles of the time, of personal adult development and strong spiritual women of courage rather than conformity, of choice rather than control, of voice rather than silence, of commitment to be leaven rather than simply a labor force. Of moral risk and public agency rather than the standard brand plastic piety that comes with disengaged detachment masking as ‘vows.’ Indeed, the vision is clear. But, just as in the desert of the exodus there are temptations that are blocking the fulfillment of the dream here and now.

1. There is the temptation to equate numbers with effectiveness: in 1976, there were 125,000 sisters in this country. Now, CARA says, there are 67,000. We don’t have enough sisters to do what needs to be done, we say. But numbers are a capitalist answer

to a Christian question. The question is not how many people do we have to do it, the question is simply are we willing to do it with however many we have? One person who will say what needs to be said may be all it takes to change the world as we know it. When one man, Martin Luther King, stood up alone against segregation, the churches stood up with him. When one man, Mahatma Gandhi, stood up alone against oppression, the country stood up with him. When one old woman, Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Grey Panthers stood up against ageism alone, the elderly of this entire country stood up with her. When one young woman, Maighread Corrigan, stood up alone against internecine warfare -- against both IRA and UDF forces in Ireland -- both Protestant and Catholic women stood up with her. The question is do we animate -- or do we only staff? Have we been seized by Jesus or simply employed in some kind of social service system till we retire? If we really think this life of ours is beautiful, if we really want people to join us, we have to stand for something worth joining!

2. There is the temptation to equate age with both ability and moral responsibility -- as if we retire from the Beatitudes before we retire from life. We're too old to do anything, we say, one eye on the median age as if it were the stock market. But Mother Teresa was 68 when she started the great work of her life. Dorothy Day was still the voice of the peace movement and the poor till she was almost 80. Oscar Romero became the saint of the oppressed when he was 60 -- after years of moral oblivion. Jean Vanier, at the age of 36, was the first to take handicapped people into his own home. That venture has become for the handicapped of the entire world a new possibility in human relationships -- and he is still doing that work at the age of 78. And Catherine Pinkerton at the age of 85 is still pounding the pavement to soften the heart of this country. How can any of us possibly do less? What is there about us that is too old, too remote, too small to pick up a phone and call senators to demand the elimination of torture and indefinite imprisonment of the innocent as instruments of war. When did we get too old, too remote, too small to sign petitions, to sit through a peace rally, to include the innocent in Iraq, and Lebanon, and Israel in our liturgies and public programs? How is that as communities we are slipping into silence when we should be dinning the world on public issues, being the voice of one crying in the wilderness? After all, Sarah was 70 and Abraham was 90, Scripture says, when they began another life. Moses himself was 80. And Aaron his helper-- his helper!--was 83! To show, as the rabbis teach, transformation does happen at any age, and that the laws of the universe are not fixed. The message is clear. As the Sufi master says: "If you think your work is over, and you're still alive--it isn't."

3. There is a temptation for leadership itself to succumb to maintenance as a substitute for mission to steward the retirement fund, to close the motherhouse doors to the world again, to turn down the vigil light and dim the congregation's witness to the world. If the leader does not lead a group to think beyond the daily, to do more than submerge itself in the rituals of community those rituals are sterile and religious life is itself hollow of the justice we say we seek, only the pale ghost of what Vatican II calls "the prophetic dimension of the church." When did we become more concerned with our own communities and congregations than we are about the condition of the human community around us? The function of religious community is to give light and balm and direction to model courage and conscience not to exist for itself alone. If our generation does not, as Wallace teaches, give the leaders of the next generation some

sign of spiritual significance and social presence in the world, where will they get it -- and will there be anyone left to try?

4. The fourth temptation at a time of social flux, for us as for all others, is the “retreat to commitment.” A group tempted to retreat to commitment begins to talk more about “commitment” and “contemplation” and community when, for whatever reason -- however well intentioned, it stops talking about justice and outreach and co-creation, and so begins to feel--as the Israelites did -- like grasshoppers -- even to ourselves. Then, as Moses said, we refuse to go on because now the trek up the mountain seems more than we can bear. When it was easy, when we ran the way of God’s companions in a crowd of others who were equally intent, when the wind was high and our hearts were young, when the changes we’d made had lightened our load, and the road ahead was clear and the sun still high in the sky we ran with eager feet. Now, in the dark, at the end of 40 years in the desert -- on the edge of the Promised Land and the mountains between it and us -- but with fewer resources, now and fewer companions, faith is harder to come by. We struggle between the past and the future, between pretending to the vision and questioning the dream. So what can we do in this year of jubilee justice to renew the promise and hasten the pace that can move the jubilee heart of religious life forward rather than back--toward the Red Sea? The bearers of the vision -- the Mary Luke Tobins, who spoke for women a woman’s voice and Elizabeth Carrolls who led us to be more leaders than superiors, and Mary Daniel Turners who gave us solidarity, and Francis Borgia’s who became for us an icon of steadfastness in the midst of chaos, and Margaret Brennans who modeled outreach in the midst of division and Barbara Thomas’ who taught us how to shape our laws to a higher law and the Theresa Kane’s who taught us that courage is the handmaiden of truth saw the vision and set the course.

The LCWR that first spoke the woman’s agenda for all the women of the world, and marched for peace to the White House itself and prepared women religious to challenge both church and country is waiting for us to do the same, to complete the course now, to open the gates to new life. Now it is for this generation of leaders, for you, for us to move into the Promised Land. To do that, I think, will demand at least six things:

1. We must engage our communities in pursuing justice issues with new vigor not as a labor force but as leaven, as voices above the storm -- strong and certain -- calling the world to another way of being. Every congregation has its prophetic members, oh, yes but prophetic individuals are no longer enough if religious life itself is to have a purpose. Prophetic individuals have taken us as far as they can. We need, as Vatican II defined us, to be prophetic congregations, we must be those who live at the center of society to leaven it, at the bottom of society to speak for it, and on the edge of society to critique it,-- not because we fear it but because we love it.

2. We must recognize that our very presence to the issues of the day is as important now as our presence to institutions was in the past. And we must at the same time maximize our public presence as religious. If religious congregations, for instance, tithed to LCWR \$2500–\$5000 a year, perhaps, we could as an entire body of women religious designate annual projects that would change the life of the poor one project at a time. Both here and around world and, at the same time, make religious meaningfully visible in the world again.

3. We must, at the same time, develop the contemplative dimension of every congregation and we must not allow false contemplation to become our equivalent for action. The two are not the same and neither can substitute for the other. By their very distance from the great questions of life, the prophet Micah proclaimed, religious leaders led the people astray. The point is clear: contemplation drives action; but action measures the integrity of the contemplation, otherwise we are saying that the Jesus who said, "the Father and I are one," the Jesus who walked from Galilee to Jerusalem, curing the sick, raising the dead, and contesting with the leaders of both state and synagogue was not a contemplative.

4. If we proclaim ourselves to be ecclesial women we must ask if what we mean by that is that we will do what the men of the church tell us to do or that we will do what the people of the church need to have us do.

5. We educated, privileged, Western, women religious must speak and act in solidarity at all times and in all places for the women of the world -- the beaten, the broken, the beggared; the trafficked, the exploited, the demeaned; the unheard, the rejected, the invisible ones so that in the other image of God the word of God can be fully expressed, fully respected.

6. We must become centers of spiritual formation as we once were centers of educational formation, accepting in new membership forms those women for whom the call to the charism is permanent but the call to the congregation is not an irreversible one. Indeed we must not stop now. We must continue the climb up the many mountains to which we have been sent in order to light the way for a world reeling from the anguish of the hungry in our streets, the danger of ecological devastation, the obscenity of war as a political strategy the sins of systemic oppression, the stench of corporate greed, and the heresy of sexism. Anything else is to make religious life a sinkhole, a swamp of pretended piety, a prophetic promise unfulfilled.

***Vatican II called religious life the prophetic dimension of the church.***

Therefore, we must climb Sinai, the mount of spirituality, where God says to Moses, "Moses, take off your shoes for where you are is holy ground," and find God in the present not the past.

***Interest in religious life declines while intentional communities are burgeoning.***

Therefore, we must go on climbing Mount Gilboa where King Saul dies and Jonathan, his heir, with him – making way for David and new life. We must release our dreamers, we must fan the flame of every new idea in every member of our communities. We must let go! We must begin again!

***Over 90% of the casualties of modern warfare are civilians. Women everywhere are denied equal voice. The poor are getting poorer by the day.***

By all means, climb Mount Olivet again where Jesus died for us and this time, like Jesus, forfeit your own old age and your time and your energy for the forgotten of this world.--

***Conscious of new needs everywhere,***

Climb Mount Moriah again where Abraham was called to sacrifice Isaac – his everything – his future and his past and give up yearning for whatever are the Egypts of your life with all its fleshpots and its false fidelities. Just when our numbers are lower than they have been since our beginnings. Just when our energy is failing and our old age knows no heir, we are asked, like Abraham, not to protect the present, not to conserve for the future but to risk it all.

***The borders of the world are porous now. Synagogues, temples, mosques and shrines rise in every city of the country where once only churches stood.***

Therefore we must climb Mount Carmel again where Elijah challenges the people to choose between what was really holy and what was simply standard brand piety, between the things of Yahweh, and the things of religion. Of the 22 ongoing significant conflicts in the world today, one-third have religion as one of the major contributing causes. (And if you think it can't happen here, remember that a July 28 *USA Today* poll tells us that 40% of this country admits some kind of prejudice toward Muslims, and 39% want more security measures for Muslims, and racial profiling for Muslims and special internal IDs for Muslims!) It is no longer enough to do church in religious life. It is no longer enough to do theology in religious life. It is no longer enough even to do good in religious life now. Now we must do the Gospel again. We must set out to build bridges of understanding in this world in ways that bring Jew, Muslim, Christian, Hindu and Buddhist as Jesus brought Jew, Samaritan, Roman and Canaanite together in loving respect for one another. With all the risk and all the rejection that implies.

***We must choose again to do both the commonplace of charity and the fire of charismatic justice.***

Therefore, we must, by all means, climb Mount Hermon again where Jesus becomes manifest to Peter, James and John not with Nathan the Priest or with David the King, not with the leaders of either state or synagogue, but with Moses and Elijah – the prophets! With Moses the Liberator, and with Elijah whom King Ahab called “that troublemaker of Israel.” Oh, yes, Mount Hermon is the sterling call to religious communities and congregations to be clear and fearless voices, to be prophetic voices in a world far too silent while global warming is being ignored and civil rights legislation is being eroded away and human cloning is less and less an unthinkable thought every day and laser weapons go on being developed while human beings are not! The question to religious congregations from Mount Hermon is what have you questioned lately – and who knows it? For whom has your congregation spoken lately – and who knows it. What have you stood for lately so that having been seen standing others may find the heart to stand, as well.

***Over 800,000 women/girls are sold into prostitution, pornography, for organ removal and unpaid labor every year.***

By all means, climb Mount Gerizim, the Mount of Samaria on which Jesus made a foreign woman six times divorced – meaning, in Jewish law, six times abandoned – an evangelist in his name and calls contemporary religious life in strong and shocking terms to face the challenge feminism brings to a spirituality patriarchal in origin, to a society hierarchical in structure and to a world so single-sexed in vision that it sees with

only one eye, hears with only one ear and thinks with only one-half of the human brain—and it shows. A world that now threatens the very existence of the planet needs the presence of the other half of the human race, needs the rest of the human agenda brought to the council tables of the world if the human race is ever to become really, fully human.

And finally, by all means, climb the Mount of the Beatitudes where no one is excluded and all the weeping world is marked our Promised Land. No doubt about it: the vision must be remembered but the dream must be achieved. The vision was easy to come by because it was driven by the promise. The dream can be stalled because it must be embraced now by those people who hesitate to go where there is no road -- and leave a path. By those whose responsibility it is to go on ahead. But it cannot be stopped because it is led by the Spirit. It is driven by the global, sought by the culture and inspired by the Gospel.

The journey is over now. After 40 years of preparing ourselves to trust in the God who has led us this far -- a fire by night, a cloud by day -- we ourselves now stand at the edge of the Promised Land.

But Moses, the cautious one, we know now, can not lead the people in, only Joshua the courageous can do that. Only you make the difference now between remembering the vision and achieving the dream. It is your choice. What will you do? Settle down and stay where you've come or go on stirring up the Spirit within us? Will you retreat to commitment or move on with conviction? Will you withdraw into a religious community or leaven the human community?

I beg you, my sisters, if religious life is to be religious life, form your communities to climb and climb and climb to that new land where God awaits us even yet, even now. And do it courageously and with confidence. Why? Because the cure for anxiety is not nostalgia for the past. Because the Chinese say that if we stay on the road we are on we shall surely get where we are going. Because Boethius reminds us that every age that is dying is simply a new age coming to life. Because, like the people of Israel, God's word to you at the foot of the mountain at this great anniversary moment is for the sake of the people, for the sake of the planet for the sake of the children for the sake of the church, with Joshua, the courageous: Go on, Go on, Go on.

I was moved to write this for the spirituality group this morning. It brings you love and prayer for a joyful Holy Week and Easter. Bea

"Ask and you shall receive..."

Well before I sit  
facing the smallest  
window in my house  
(the one that opens  
on the infinite)  
you penetrate my walls  
subtle as electrons  
strong enough  
to bear heart-longings  
farther than the newest star  
then back  
to breach the fortress  
of a military mind  
and gentle it  
toward peace.

God of power  
God of people,  
You are the life of all  
That lives:  
Energy  
That fills the earth,  
Vitality  
That brings to birth,  
The impetus towards making whole  
Whatever is bruised or broken.  
In You we grow  
To know  
The truth  
That sets all creation free.  
You are the Song  
The whole earth sings,  
The promise liberation brings,  
Now and forever.

Miriam Therese Winter

“...this central event of the gospel, the miracle of resurrection, enables the Christian to perceive the same miracle of regeneration constantly in process everywhere in the natural order, in human lives and communities, in the whole created cosmos. We dare to believe that God is at work everywhere, bringing new life out of death, hope out of despair, light out of darkness... (we see) profound parallels between the death and resurrection of Jesus and the death and rebirth of the natural world in the cycle of the seasons ... convinced that in raising Jesus from the dead God has offered transformation of all people and all that is in the world . “ EASTER GARDEN

Nicola Slee