

In his book called PECULIAR SPEECH, Will Willimon states, 'When you join Rotary they give you a handshake and a lapel pin. When you join the church, we throw you in the water and half drown you.... Ponder that. Whatever signing on with Jesus means, it means that we will not do just as we are, that change is demanded, daily, sometimes painful turning and detoxification that does not come naturally.' He cites biblical images of baptism: stories of a watery chaos pushed back by God when earth was formed from the void; of seas burst forth by God's anger, wiping out every living thing in the flood in the days of Noah, the first sailor, but a story of a God who hangs up a rainbow and promises 'never again.' Of a people led from slavery through waters to a promised land as imperial chariots floundered; a story of Jonah sloshing about in the waters of a fish's belly until he is spit up on land to save a people; of disciples crying out in terror in the storms; a story of Jesus who saved us by an issue of water and blood from His side. In contrast, minimalist catechesis leads to minimalist, puny, miserly, fastidious ways of baptizing, more concerned about messing up bouffant hairdos than dying and rising in Christ Jesus and produces puny little disciples.

Easter is a powerhouse of God's grace, bursting into our world to renew us from anything puny, little, or insignificant. Easter invites us to live a big life, an ALLELUIA life, a life that is filled with love and goodness, generosity and compassion, forgiveness, and service to others. Easter reminds us that life is about God, and God is about big things, great things, wonderful things. If we take our baptism seriously (the meaning of our Lenten-Easter journey) we end up with a life that is worth living, despite whatever crosses and sufferings may mark it – and they WILL mark it!

Here's a more poetic approach to it:

On this Easter day,

Remind me of the surpassing  
worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,  
of encountering him at the empty tomb.

I surrender to you everything that is dead within me –

my stillborn dreams,  
my unhealed wounds,  
my besetting anxieties.

O God of new beginnings,

bring life where there is death,  
I pray.

**Set before me some high challenge**

**that will force me to rely on your power,  
the power at work within me to do far more  
abundantly than all I can ask or imagine.**

**Focus my thoughts not on what I cannot do**

**because of my limitations,  
but on what you want to do  
in and through me by your Spirit.**

**May I live in the light of Easter's dawn,**

**and may there always be room  
for an alleluia in my heart. Amen.**

**(Evan Drake Howard, in FROM SACRIFICE TO CELEBRATION: A LENTEN JOURNEY, p. 94-95)**

**HAPPY LIFE-FILLED, SERVICE DRIVEN, LOVE OVERFLOWING EASTER!**