Columns
Spirituality



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Sometimes it's hard to gain perspective. The situation in our world just doesn't seem to let up. The war in Ukraine continues. The devastation in Gaza is still being revealed. The dysfunction in Congress seems unending, The political season promises more polarization.

I reflect on all the years that so many of us have been a voice for transformation — calling for more just economic policies, addressing the climate crisis, urging a new and improved immigration policy, advocating for a nonviolent approach to resolving conflicts and respecting the human dignity of each person. And I have to ask myself: Has anything changed? Have we moved toward a more loving community at all?

As I prayed *Teilhard De Chardin: A Book of Hours*, edited by Notre Dame Srs. Kathleen Deignan and Libby Osgood, something I read stayed with me. I can't seem to let it go. Teilhard wrote:

> Within the vast process of arrangement from which life emerges, every success is paid for by a large percentage of failures. One cannot progress in being without paying a mysterious tribute of tears, blood, and sin. It is hardly surprising, then, if all around us some shadows grow more dense at the same time as the light grows brighter: for, when we see it from this angle, suffering in all its forms and all its degrees is no more than a natural consequence of the movement by which we were brought into being.

Some shadows grow more dense at the same time as the light grows brighter. I find hope in that thought. Both are part of our reality. There are growing shadows and brighter light. Evolution and growth take time and are filled with success and failures, joy and suffering.

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How can I embrace that reality and continue to respond in ways that don't frustrate me or dissipate my energy? I found wisdom about this in Teilhard's words as well.

> Make possible the flowering in the human heart of this new universal love, so often vainly dreamed of but now at last declaring itself as both possible and necessary. Notice this: if people on earth, all over the earth, are ever to love one another it is not enough for them to recognize in one another the elements of a single something; they must also, by developing a "planetary" consciousness, become aware they are becoming a single somebody. ...
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> I told myself that human labor, whatever form it may take, must be essentially tenacious, patient, gentle. By uncomplainingly putting right the disorder and obstacles, a new order is taking shape and painfully clearing a place for itself in the world. ...
>
> Trust and patience borne on these two wings, you have a chance of seeing the face of a God appear within you. ...
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> No: the work is not yet finished, nor is it doomed. ...
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> Be happy, dear and precious friend. The only danger would be to hope too little, and to trust insufficiently. If ever you have the impression of any shadow, just laugh at it. There is light, and only light, in front of us.

Teilhard's words reawaken in me the belief that the future is evolving toward greater unity and greater love. Divine Mystery is at the heart of who we and the universe are becoming. We have a very active role in responding to the light that grows brighter even as we acknowledge the shadows.

Teilhard's words came to me as I've been noticing the daffodils pushing up through the soil now that spring is arriving where I live. I began to imagine I was one of them. I suspect I might feel that the darkness of the soil surrounding me was a no-way-out situation, wondering if it is possible to break through. Then slowly feeling the warmth of the sun through the soil, I'd begin to awaken to a new possibility.

Slowly, steadily, I arise from the darkness of the earth into the light. The light beckons me forward and upward until I emerge in my essence ... a daffodil.

I felt relief and began to smile. Wisdom is all around me if only I can see, if only I take that long, loving look at the real. Take time during spring, whenever it arrives where you live, to watch the emergence of life. Hold those images in your heart and

slowly read Teilhard's wisdom.

Then simply sit, inviting Divine Mystery to work within you renewing your trust and patience that we are slowly creating a planetary "somebody," emerging within the appropriate time.