



By Pat Haggerty

I have a friend who posts beautiful pictures on Facebook. She takes all of them. They are magnificent sunrises, beautiful snowfalls, trees through the dusk, a single cardinal on a branch, and many more. Most recently, she posted a lone, emerging purple crocus as it opened its petals to the sun. I look forward to these pictures; they are a source of inspiration and reflection for me.

One might say they are a source of hope. They represent the hope of a new day; the hope of a peaceful night; or the hope of spring emerging. After a long, difficult winter, we need the hope of spring. We need the refreshment of what that crocus brings---of what it stands for. It stands for new life and it stands for a starting over. With every spring comes a renewal of nature and a renewal, of sorts, of ourselves. We come out from the darkness of winter and emerge into the newness of warmth, sunlight, and hope.

Sounds a little like the Resurrection, doesn't it? With Easter we have emerged from the grayness of Lent into the light of Christ's Resurrection bringing with it the hope of salvation and the joy of our redemption. We have been to the tomb and found it empty. We have seen the cloths left behind and the stone rolled over. We have seen the emptiness but have found fullness in its place. We have found HOPE!

I am grateful for the hope that the resurrection brings. I am grateful for the gift of hope that comes with this Easter season. I am grateful for a lasting hope that feeds my soul and strengthens my being.

What would we do without hope? Unfortunately, we see what happens to people without hope. They despair. They crumble. They falter. They give up. Like George Bailey who almost gave up without the help of Clarence, many come to the precipice ready for the plunge.

It is through God's grace and through his resurrection that we, as Christians, are sustained through hope. I am so grateful for the hope that the Risen Lord brings. I am thankful for this gift. As in Paul's famous letter to the Corinthians where he talks about love, he also speaks of hope: "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (I Corinthians 13:7)

Hope and love are intrinsically tied. When we have love we are also hopeful. Easter has brought us God's love and it has given us hope. Be grateful for that hope, and be grateful for all the purple crocuses you see!