



The Healing Touch

BY BLANCA I. RODRIGUEZ, MINISTERIAL STUDENT,
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

For most of my childhood and adult life, I had been very dismissive of miracles portrayed in the New Testament, including the healing stories. I read them narrowly and very literally, and I absolutely disbelieved in a deity engaged in

supernatural interventions that defy the laws of nature and cure incurable diseases, available only to those who have faith in Jesus.

Interestingly, it was through Buddhism that I came to an understanding of New Testament healing stories that allows me to claim them as a significant part of my own theology. More specifically, Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh and his beautiful book, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, helped me see the beauty of these Christian healing stories. From that book:

Mindfulness is very much like the Holy Spirit. Both are agents of healing. When you have mindfulness, you have love and understanding, you see more deeply, and you can heal the wounds in your own mind. The Buddha was called the King of Healers. In the Bible, when someone touches Christ, he or she is healed. It is not just touching a cloth that brings about a miracle. When you touch deep understanding and love, you are healed.... When you are really there, showing your loving-kindness and understanding, the [healing] energy of the Holy Spirit is in you.

“When you touch deep understanding and love, you are healed.” This was an epiphany moment for me, helping me understand the healing stories of the Christian Scriptures in a way that was faithful to my own religious convictions. The story of the hemorrhaging woman in the Gospel of Mark is one that stands out for me. This woman, who remains unnamed, had been hemorrhaging for 12 years, despite medical treatments that had cost her all that she owned, leaving her worse off and in utter despair. But she had heard of Jesus and she believed that to be near him was to be in the presence of a profound and healing love, acceptance and understanding.

She so trusted that deep understanding and love that she, a woman who under Jewish law should have kept herself bound to her home, instead became empowered enough to disregard the law, at risk of being caught and punished, and go out into the crowded street where she would have to rub up against other people, all to surreptitiously touch Jesus’ robe.

The story goes on to say that at the moment his robe was touched, Jesus felt his power drain from him, and he stopped suddenly in the midst of a great crowd of people. Ever mindfully present, Jesus paused to find out who had touched him. He stopped because it was important to publically acknowledge the faith and courage of this unnamed woman and forever end her emotional and social isolation. The woman approached Jesus, trembling with fear, and admitted she had touched him. Rather than shame her for her audacity or condemn her for violating the purity laws, Jesus openly and lovingly called her “daughter” and affirmed that her own faith had healed her.

In the past, that word “faith,” in the context of the New Testament, always upset me. As someone brought up Catholic, I associated it with faith in Jesus and the Catholic Church as the exclusive source of salvation, and I didn’t have that kind of belief. But, I understand now that the faith this story talks about is much broader and universal, and each of us can have *this* faith.

Quest

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Healing yourself
is connected
with healing others.
—Yoko Ono

A monthly for religious liberals

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It is faith that depends on our own state of being. Are we mindful of and truly present with our own vulnerabilities, fears and sorrows—and those of others? Do we have faith in and show loving-kindness to ourselves and to others, regardless of our fears, shame, vulnerabilities and sorrows? Do we have the kind of faith in the existence and healing power of deep love and understanding that the hemorrhaging woman had?

If so, then I say we have faith in ultimate reality; we have faith in the Way of the Buddha and the Way of Jesus. With that faith we can know and touch God, however we conceive of God. We can be healed. And we can touch others with love, understanding and compassion and help them to heal.

And what are we being healed of? Fair question. Do I believe that deep love and understanding cures incurable diseases? I'll answer by saying, for me, healing is a different and much broader concept with a more beneficial outcome than a medical cure of a medical illness. The most beneficial result is that we be able to heal our hearts and minds. And I don't know of a more powerful medicine for healing our hearts and minds than deep compassion, understanding and the power of loving touch, as in the story of the hemorrhaging woman.

What the writer of this Gospel knew nearly 2000 years ago, and what the Buddha knew 2500 years ago—that “our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion”—is actually being scientifically proven now. We know from the research work of psychoanalysts such as John Bowlby beginning in the 1930s, and of primatologists such as Harry Harlow during the 1950s and 60s that humans cannot thrive without touch. Without human touch that communicates love and caring, understanding and acceptance, we are emotionally scarred and stunted.

In the last five decades there has been a considerable amount of scientific

research demonstrating that caring touch heals, and it heals in all sorts of ways, physically and emotionally. Caring touch makes premature babies gain weight faster, strengthens their immune and nervous systems and enables them to thrive. Touch helps people who are HIV positive strengthen their immune system and produce more killer cells that fight infections.

Touch helps heart disease patients to lower blood pressure, reducing harmful stress hormones and releasing healing endorphin hormones. Touch helps people with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. Touch helps reduce depression and anxiety, both in the person being touched and in the person offering the soothing touch. Studies demonstrate that touch even helps athletes win more games, especially when the touch happens at emotionally-filled moments and when stakes are high.

In short, caring human touch actually changes us at a molecular, chemical, emotional and energy level. On top of all that, it changes us at a spiritual level—and I call that healing.

How is it that touch heals? Well, it is tied to the intention with which the touch is offered. Researchers have been able to demonstrate that there is a larger healing impact when the giver of the touch is feeling love or caring toward the person he or she is touching. The greatest healing impact is when there is a synchronicity of intentions and emotions between the giver and the receiver of the touch, as there was in the 2000 year old story of Jesus and the hemorrhaging woman.

We heal, we derive well-being, when we are touched with deep love and understanding, when we are in synchrony with or open to that deep love and understanding. And what is the greatest disease around the world today that cries out for healing? I agree with Mother Theresa when she said:

The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or cancer; it is being unwanted, unloved and uncared for. Of all the

diseases I have known, loneliness is the worst. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair and hopelessness is love. There are many people in the world who are dying for a piece of bread, but there are many more dying for a little love.

May we offer that healing love, that healing touch. May we be healed. ■



Notice of Annual Meeting

Notice to all members of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, Unitarian Universalist

Per Article VII, Sections 1 and 2, of the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) Bylaws, the 42nd Annual Meeting will be held via conference call and screen sharing on June 18, 2015 at 6:00PM Eastern Time.

We will post all the necessary documents and contact information to the CLF website (www.questformeaning.org/annualmeeting) by June 11, 2015. You can download materials, print them, and if a ballot is needed, send it along to the CLF office at 24 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210. Or call the CLF office at 617-948-6166 and request a paper copy.

The purpose of the meeting is to elect a moderator to preside at the meeting from among the members present, elect three members to 3-year terms on the board of directors and one member to the nominating committee, and to elect a clerk and treasurer from the slate of candidates presented on the ballot.

Rebecca Scott,
Clerk
April 15, 2015

We Go to the Sea

BY **REV. JASON COOK**, SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA, DIRECTOR OF RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

When my dad was a kid, his father had a stroke. Everyone in their church clucked their tongues. It's too bad, they said, that God had seen fit for that to happen.

My grandmother got busy praying even harder than usual. She was determined that the four children still at home would be cleansed in body and spirit, so, on the advice of her pastor, she reluctantly but regularly whipped the children. As she said, "I'm doing this for the sins I don't know about—but God does."

My grandfather, a bricklayer by trade, was now physically unable to work much. This meant there usually wasn't much money and there often wasn't much to eat. Their shabbily constructed house sat by itself deep in rural Indiana, and when winter came, the water pipes, which had been laid too close to the surface of the ground, would freeze. To get the nearest available water my eight-year-old dad and his younger brother would have to go out in the bitter cold and harness a goat to a cart. They'd lead the goat and cart up a steep hill to my great-grandparents' house, where they'd fill three buckets with water, put them on the cart, and then traipse back down the hill again. As you can imagine, neither my father nor my uncle (nor the goat) enjoyed this process.

One winter brought with it a terrible blizzard. The power went out, the pipes were, of course, frozen, and the goat had somehow gotten out of his pen, never to be seen again. Despite all those concerns, all my dad could think of was how the members of their church would say that it was somehow his family's fault. "Why has God done this to us?" he wailed. "What did we do to deserve this?"



My grandfather, who had rarely spoken since the stroke, gave him a long look and then wrinkled his forehead.

He cleared his throat, shook his head, and said, "Enough." There was a long pause while the family stared. "Enough," he said again. "We go to the sea." And that's exactly what they did.

With most of their meager belongings in one suitcase, four children and two adults—none of whom had ever laid eyes on the sea—set out in a rusted car that had seen better days. They drove for three days and nights. They drove out of the snow and ice and spent every last dollar they had saved eating at roadside restaurants along the way. And at the end of the journey, there was the sea.

My dad never knew why his father took them to the sea at that moment. Maybe he had always wanted to go and maybe it seemed like the perfect place to escape to when things got too bad. Whatever the reason, it ended up being the right thing to do. To hear my dad tell it, that first moment when the blue expanse of sea opened up before him was breathtaking. But it was more than just a feast for the eyes. Camped out at the warmth of the seaside over the next several days, away from the voices that had caused so many wounds amongst them, the family began to heal from what they had been through.

Their struggles didn't magically go away, and neither did the scars from their wounds, but with each turn of the tide, my dad said, something inside him began to smooth over, and he decided that a God who could be part of this ocean—majestic and cooling and soothing and teeming with life and glimmering darkness and wonder—that God would not have caused his

father's stroke, or the terrible blizzard, or been complicit in whatever had happened to the poor goat.

Those memories of the family spending time together at the seashore stayed with my father through the years. He returned to the sea many times, and so I grew up with the sea as a place of healing to return to again and again. And now I live by the sea, and in looking out at the waves, I see all the pain and possibility of the world we live in. For the vast mysterious ocean—filled with mountain ranges whose heights surpass the Alps, with volcanoes and ten-foot tall tube-worms—remains more unknown and shrouded in secrecy than Mars or Venus.

Like the sea, we humans are shrouded in mystery in many ways. We act and think and feel for reasons that are often as unknown as they are known. While some of us may like to believe we're rational creatures—and we certainly don't want to discount our ability to reason—the truth is that we are also irrational creatures, often acting out of pain and not even aware of it.

Too often—and I know I'm guilty of it—we forget to take the time to think about where we come from, the experiences we've had, the things that have shaped us. Too often we don't take time to fully heal from our wounds, and that's why I say that our faith communities have to intentionally make space for that healing to happen.

For there isn't a person reading these words who hasn't been hurt at some point. And so when we come together in our church communities, we must always acknowledge that we come from many places and many experiences. While, at times, we may have ridden joyfully atop the waves of life, at other times we have been pulled under those same waves, scraped across the rocks, left gasping for air.

Wounds come from many places. They might have been from our family or

neighbor or partner who said we weren't worthy. It might have been from the loss of people from death or distance. It might have been from illness or job loss or money troubles or anxiety about what tomorrow may bring. It might have been from the larger oppressive social systems that have beaten us down along the way, systems that have ignored us or even punished us for being our authentic selves.

Many of us still carry around these wounds, some of them still as fresh and painful as when we first received them. And, of course, every day there are opportunities for fresh lacerations.

We must make space to acknowledge the sting of our wounds, even as we learn to release that pain.

It's understandable that some might think that instead of focusing on healing, our time would be better served out in the world, actively fighting for justice. In a world of self-help books and "selfies" and beauty products and glossy magazines, the idea of spiritual healing can seem like another trip on the self-indulgence train. (And I'm not knocking self-indulgence; we can all use a little of it every now and then.) But the notion of spiritual healing is more than a passing fad. It's been with us throughout our history as Unitarian Universalists.

I think back to early Unitarians in New England. They balked at the old way of thinking—that only some pre-ordained people could be saved. Instead, Unitarians championed the idea that people can find salvation through doing good work in the world. What a healing balm this was, soothing those wounds that came from never feeling good enough!

Meanwhile, Universalists were offering their own healing balm in the notion that if God is a loving God, then that means all humanity will ultimately be reconciled with that divine love. There

was no hell, no damnation, no eternal punishment, none of that nightmarish stuff that had scarred so many along the way. From then to now, Unitarians and Universalists have offered healing for wounds from the fear of not being good enough, not being worthy enough, not being loved enough—issues that still plague people today.

You might think the rationalism of Humanism would seem a far cry from the more emotive notion of healing, but it, too, brought with it opportunities for profound healing. Humanism values the ability of human beings to reason, to take action, to have agency over their lives. In a world where systems of oppression were becoming more and more subtle and insidious, this emphasis on humanity's capacity for transformation was curative stuff indeed. It encouraged people to not just live with their wounds, but find ways to actively mend brokenness.

It's no accident that healing has underscored our movement. I believe it was an instinctive response to this faith's call for transformation. Healing was necessary then and is certainly necessary now for us to be able to do the work of Unitarian Universalism: transforming ourselves and the world for the better. It's necessary to heal our wounds because if we don't, we can too easily forget that we do not ride the waves of the great ocean of life alone, and we can become engulfed in a tidal wave of isolation.

It is necessary to heal our wounds so that when we come face to face with the realization that no community is perfect—that we are all human and we are all flawed—we will be strong enough to hold each other with loving care and not drown in a flood of old pain. And finally, it's necessary to heal our wounds so that our eyes can be open to joy, open to the awe and wonder of a vast universe that cradles us in multitudinous possibilities of love.

And when we are able to stand in this space of awe, when we are able to feel

a deep connection to one another, when we can hold both our joy and our pain with grace, then we can truly do the work needed to build beloved community. Our wounds will always be present, but there can be healing. Scars will remain, but when we work for justice, we will wash them clean with the love that pours over us like waves.

And how do we do this healing? The answer is simple—at least simple to say, if not to do: *we make space for it*. Just as the sea is comprised of both water and salt, so, too does our faith community consist of both joy and pain. We must acknowledge the reality of that pain, for we need the buoyancy this "salt" provides if we are to sail atop the water. Otherwise, we sit in a shallow puddle. We must make space to acknowledge the sting of our wounds, even as we learn to release that pain. We must learn to hold each other's pain and acknowledge that our work as a community involves healing both our own and others' wounds. We must learn to embrace that work so that we are better equipped to go out and work for justice. When we work to heal our own wounds our skills at healing these larger wounds should become more proficient.

And so, I wish you a moment like my father and his family had so many years ago. I wish for all of us to stand upon the shore, facing the awe of what lies before us. I wish for all of us to walk into the sea, feeling the water upon our skin, the healing water made of our tears, our hope, our commitment to life. I wish for all of us to know the feeling of stepping out renewed.

We do not forget the past—we acknowledge the goat has disappeared, the blizzard is still raging, the angry misguided

voices still chatter on, but we sail forward into the future alongside those closest to us, doing the work of love in all its glorious and infinite possibilities.



Praying in the Wind

BY TET GALLARDO,
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UNITARIAN
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Today, howling winds, too often heard in these parts, tear through the glass windows sealed for comfort. Incurrable. The deaths of 10,000 or so on one island during the last super-typhoon of this magnitude is still fresh in the collective memory of those among the 7,000 islands of this country that were spared. The winds don't lash or buffet, they crush any sliver of faith that God will spare us from danger. At least for me.

Today, right now, we hear of minimal casualties. I wait. It's past midnight

and I won't be able to sleep. And what do I pray for that seems doable or reasonable to our God? Compliance hardly saves us in this nation that is hard to rule over. Whatever semblance of stability we try for ultimately gets challenged by powers of nature or powers-that-be. Does God honor our efforts to suffer one another? When we barter our personal space for the accommodation of another, does God not see how small we feel?

I only pray that as minister, I have something to say next Sunday to the congregation I serve, when all the numbers are in and we all feel once again that nagging doubt. I will tell them that the wound of disappointment is where the light enters, as Rumi said. That I open the wound to a different care. That I am feeling small because I am. Because power does not lie in

invincibility but in resilience; not in domination but in steadfastness. That it is not certainty around which the order of God is built—not in control, but in adaptability, in forgiveness and love that adapts to the loved without losing oneself.

And in the core of doubt is the ability to accept the relativity of certainty as well as of failure, of loss, of change. The best window to the eternal is the one where we find ourselves not as people comfortably looking out, but one in which we are the stranger looking in, uncertain and hopeful. And sometimes the darker it is inside, the better we see ourselves reflected. Our reflection shows our deepest intention. It takes courage to see God within ourselves. And that may be the message for the living. Perhaps only the dead can reside in certainty. ■

Healing

BY ADAM DYER, MINISTERIAL
CANDIDATE, PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION



Don't speak to me of "healing" racism,
Or "wounded souls" or the "painful hurt"
Until you are willing to look at my skin
And see the whip marks on my great-great-grandmother
Laury's body.

Don't speak to me of "values"
Or "justice" or "righting the wrongs"
Until you are able to feel the heartache of my great grandfather Graham
Whose own father was sold before he could know him.

Don't speak to me of "equity"
Or "opportunity" or the "common good"
Until you are able to hear the fear in my grandmother
Mae's voice
Arriving in New York at 16 in her first real pair of shoes.

Don't speak to me of "passion"
Or "longing" or "standing on the side of love"
Until you know the shame of my mother Edwina
Whose teachers made an example of her body
Calling the beautiful curve of her lower back primitive.

Don't speak to me of "together"
Or "understanding" or "empathy"
Until you know my rage at being denied work by a white woman
Who said I don't act black or masculine enough.

You want to speak of "healing"
But the pain you are trying to heal has no real name.
This "pain" you speak of has no story;
Like your tepid desire to actually make change,
It is anonymous, vague...empty.

Don't speak to *me* of "healing"
For, I heal the second I am ripped apart.
My wounds self-suture,
And like the clever creature I am,
I just grow new legs to outrun the pain even faster.
It is something I have had to practice as long as my
ancestors have known you,
And that seems like an eternity.

So, don't speak to me of "healing"
Because you cannot know what healing means
Until you have known what it means to be hurt. ■



From Your Minister

BY MEG RILEY
SENIOR MINISTER,
CHURCH OF THE
LARGER FELLOWSHIP

I told someone with a long-term illness—in this person's case, chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)—that I was writing a column on healing. *Healing*, she said. *I've come to dislike that word intensely*. When I questioned her further, she talked about all of the people, practicing all kinds of traditional and nontraditional medicine, who had promised healing if she followed their plans. Then, she said, when the CFS didn't abate, many of them got angry at her and acted as if her continued sickness was somehow her own fault.

Healing's become one of those words like diet, she said. *Loaded with guilt and blame. I stay away from it.*

Certainly, we have all heard the horror stories. The blind woman in my class at seminary who had been told by her fundamentalist Christian church that if she *really* accepted Jesus she would have "eyes to see." The woman with cancer who is told that she's obviously angry, and if she would just meditate on her second chakra and forgive her parents, the cancer would go away. Belief systems that blame the one who is in pain and in need of help. Not what I would call healing at all.

As I've aged, I've become highly suspicious of any belief system without a "pressure relief valve," any closed circular system where there is only one way forward and those not on that path are bad, wrong, deserving of whatever they suffer. Such systems seem to hurt people, and the more personal the content of a belief system, the more pain is inflicted. Nothing is more personal than the state of our own bodies.

One pressure relief valve regarding healing is the radical notion that sometimes continued illness, or even

death, is exactly what healing looks like. I have learned a great deal from CLF members who have experienced this kind of healing.

Ann Woldt, a long-term CLF member who has lived with multiple sclerosis for 31 years, says this:

I have come to the brink of death more times than I want to. Either the flare-up has been so severe that there seems to be little chance I'll be able to enjoy any sort of meaningful life, or—as happened last summer—being told by medical professionals that my situation was so dire...that there was little they could do but offer palliative care...So another cycle through the grief process, coming once again to acceptance...but always this inner flame burning, reminding me that, until it actually goes OUT, we keep fighting. And so I have.

Do what you can to live life as fully as you can. Perhaps, in a nutshell, that is the definition of healing.

Since last summer, Ann has had a remarkable comeback. The service we began planning to be her memorial service evolved into a fabulous celebration of her life, with friends and relatives coming from across the country to share how Ann's life has enhanced and transformed their own... and she has regained a quality of life she did not expect.

And yet, as Ann says:

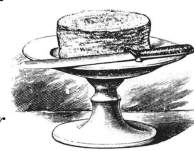
There is healing...and then there is healing. I'll never be healed of the MS.... The "healing" I've done regarding the MS is more healing of the spirit, healing of the soul.... The healing I experienced was much like the stages of grief, ending with acceptance. Lots of anger in the beginning, lots of unanswerable questions, starting

with Why me??? Why did I get stuck with this? What have I done to deserve this?

And then a lot of bargaining with a non-existent god—take this away and I'll give you—well, there's not much to give. Reading about the stages of grief much later, I could walk my way through them.... [Acceptance means] coming to terms with the fact that the chronic illness isn't going away. I have two basic choices in life—live with [MS], making life as livable as possible, or die.

I asked Ann, admittedly with some sense of trepidation that it might be a really offensive question, if MS had brought her wisdom or benefits of any kind. She replied:

Benefits? No. But I am certainly a much better person, flawed as I am, than I would be if I hadn't been dealing with this for 31 years. More patient, more tolerant, more accepting of people. More open to others' pain and suffering. More resolute. I don't take a lot of time dithering about things—life is too short, and most issues are really too small.... I'm more inner focused. More centered.... I've learned what I can and cannot do, and while sometimes I get that wrong, I feel I am the best judge of what my life is like day to day, and what I can or can't manage... Life is too short.



Indeed, eat dessert first. Do what you can to live life as fully as you can. Don't mourn too long over what you can't do or can no longer do, and rejoice in what you can.

As we reflect on healing this month, that seems like great advice for people of all physical abilities and experiences. Do what you can to live life as fully as you can. Perhaps, in a nutshell, that is the definition of healing. ■

April 2015

REsources for Living

BY LYNN UNGAR, MINISTER FOR
LIFESPAN LEARNING, CHURCH OF
THE LARGER FELLOWSHIP



There are plenty of things to wonder about in the Easter story, but here's one of them. If Jesus was a miracle healer, someone who cured everything from blindness to skin disease, someone who even raised a man from the dead, then why didn't he heal himself? Why not fix up his own wounds while he was on the cross?

One Christian answer is that Jesus chose to suffer and die, offering himself as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of everyone else. But it's pretty hard to figure out how one person suffering terribly would work to pay off all the things that everyone had done or would do wrong. Two wrongs don't make a right. And it's hard to imagine a loving God who would see having a beloved one in misery as being any kind of a solution. The logic of atonement, of Jesus choosing to buy back sinful souls, works for some people, but I don't get it.

Of course, another possibility would simply be that Jesus didn't work miracles at all, and that the stories of his miraculous ability to heal people were made up to make him look more powerful and holy.

Or maybe neither of these answers really gets at the point of Easter. Jesus, after all, is not healed in the sense of getting fixed and going back to just how he was before the crucifixion. Unlike Lazarus, who Jesus is said to have brought back after having been dead for four days, Jesus doesn't just get up, brush off his robes, and get on with life. He isn't healed, he's resurrected.

Which is a kind of healing, but not the kind you usually think of when someone says that the scrape on their knee has healed. Resurrection is about dying and then coming back to a new life. If Jesus had just patched himself back together and called himself healed it would have been

remarkable, but it wouldn't have been much basis for a religion. But resurrection is a different story. Resurrection is about

all the ways in which our wounds don't go away, but we manage to find new life, not in spite of those wounds, but because of them.

Years ago I used to listen to a great radio show, called *From the Top*, which features young classical musicians. The children and youth on this show are amazing, and it was always a pleasure to hear both the music and the interviews. But only one show has really stuck with me. On it, they featured a young man who had played oboe on the show a couple of years previously.

Resurrection is about all the ways in which our wounds don't go away, but we manage to find new life, not in spite of those wounds, but because of them.

Like all the kids on the show, he was stellar. But some months after his oboe playing was featured on this radio show he had an accident that took off three of his fingers, and ended his promising future as an oboist. Those fingers weren't coming back. He wasn't going to be healed, and playing the oboe was just not going to happen. His life wasn't over, but for someone who had been utterly dedicated to his music, I'm sure it felt that way.

But the show I listened to wasn't about sympathy for the loss of a musical career. They had him back on to play music. Because it turned out that while he wasn't able to play oboe with missing fingers, it was perfectly possible to play the French horn. This young man died as an oboe player, but was reborn as an artist on the French horn. The wounds didn't go away, but they led to him finding a new life, a

new way forward. Maybe it wasn't what he would have chosen, but it was *life*, a way to follow his passion. It wasn't healing, it was resurrection.

Jesus died as a man, but was reborn as message of love and justice that has lived for many centuries longer than any human body could. The message of Easter is not an easy assurance that whatever happens to you, you will find healing and be good as new. The message of Easter is that even in the hardest times it is possible that you will be made new, born again with a sense of purpose that doesn't take away the pain of the wounds, but gives them meaning.

Just ask the parents who have lost children to gun violence who are now campaigning for sensible gun controls. Just ask the poets and painters who have turned grief into art. Just ask the folks who have come up from the depths of addiction to counsel and mentor others who are engaged in that struggle. Resurrection is a story, but it's a story that happens in real life, over and over again, as people struggle their way to new life. ■



Quest Monthly is a refuge of spiritual reflection for thousands, and CLF's online presence has been a healing sanctuary for many across the globe.

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A Tomb Is No Place to Stay

BY **RICHARD GILBERT**, MINISTER EMERITUS,
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

A tomb is no place to stay,
Be it a cave in the Judean hills
Or the dark cavern of the spirit.

A tomb is no place to stay
When fresh grass rolls away the stone of winter cold
And valiant flowers burst their way to warmth and light.

A tomb is no place to stay
When each morning announces our reprieve,
And we know we are granted yet another day of living.

A tomb is no place to stay
When life laughs a welcome
To hearts that have been away too long.



From his book In the Holy Quiet: Meditations by Richard S. Gilbert, published by iUniverse in 2012. Available from the UUA bookstore (www.uuabookstore.org).