

## Polly's Ponderings

*"If God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" Matthew 6:30*

I must confess I'm not an enjoy-the-scenery-along-the-route kind of gal. When I get in the car I am focused on getting from A to B, in fact, if I'm not the one driving, I am usually asleep in the in-between A and B part of the journey. I probably should stop and enjoy the journey along the way. Stop and smell the roses, isn't that how the phrase goes? Most of the time I am too focused on the destination to notice the in between time.

But for some odd reason today was different. I had a tight time frame to get to the next meeting, which was two hours away. So, I headed out focused on driving and watching the time. Yet out of the corner something caught my eye. It was color on each side of the road, vivid blues, and spectacular oranges – blue bonnets and Indian paint brushes. I didn't notice them the last drive through this area. No, sometime between destinations they had emerged from the shackles of the previous season. How sad that I was not aware of their appointed arrival. Here they were evidence of spring. My mind wandered to a time long ago when I was more watchful for signs of spring.



My father was diagnosed with cancer in the last days of fall before the cold, snow piled, ice slicked days of winter arrived in South Dakota. He fought but the cancer had spread everywhere and the inevitable was already ordained even then he looked out and saw the purple pansies so loved. Evidence there were still moments of joy in the heavy burdens of the winter days. He would soon take his last earthly breath. He was not afraid he knew his destination. What he wanted for those who were on this journey with him was that they not focus on his destination but rather notice the simply signs of hope along the way. So, he asked the Lord if he could be allowed to die in the spring, when the snow was melted, and the flowers were bursting forth. He had those around him focused on looking for signs of spring. Dad died January 29, deep in the winter season in Sioux Falls South Dakota. And yet that day after he took his first eternal breathe, we saw two bunnies hoping toward the cemetery just behind his bedroom window. And a few days later as we were laying him to rest in the frozen ground, the sound of water trickling from melting snow filled us with a bit of hope, early signs of spring could be heard. And I could swear I saw a crocus emerging from the frozen ground a good month before they were to be expected.



Suddenly, I realized that as I was driving to my meeting place, I had missed the longing, the expectation, the waiting for signs of hope. Focused solely on the getting from A to B (the place of my destination), I had missed the expectation of the emerging presence of creation and hope along the way. And in missing the expected waiting time I had also missed the joy of the arrival of these flowers and their testimony to hope.

This Lenten season as we travel through the wilderness with Christ until the arrival of his bursting forth from the grave, I pray that we will take the journey more slowly and seek signs of hope along the way. I pray we long for his emergence from the shackles of the season and the sin and death that has held us captive for so long. I pray we will enjoy freedom at the end of the journey, the emergence of the resurrected Savior into the world. I pray that we will all look for the presence of the God of creation, who sends flowers along the way to remind us that while we are walking through wild places we are not alone. Even in the most desolate moments of life, the darkest of places where despair and grief try to overshadow God's gift of hope, the signs of His love and His care for us can be found.

