

Butterfly Things

Sometimes we can get so mired down with earthly pursuits that we do not look up to heaven. What a tragedy when that happens, and it can be the case without our ever realizing it.

The other day on a walk on a warm day which previews a coming spring, I saw three butterflies. The first was blue, the second yellow, and the third a bright orange. They were all in fantastic fluttering flight, just out of reach, but close enough to lend a rich sense of beauty to the moment.

For centuries, Christians have been compared to butterflies. The butterfly begins life as a caterpillar, a many-legged, earthbound creature which has limited motion and perspective. Into the cocoon, and out of the darkness, the butterfly emerges and can fly anywhere, with beauty and lifted spirits left behind whenever it appears.

Becoming a Christian is a wonderful transformation. The scriptures ring out the butterfly truth that “anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

We must embrace our new life, the one God has in mind for his people. We are not only butterfly people by our nature, we are called to do butterfly things.

The first butterfly thing which must happen is that we realize that a new life has begun. In wonderful times, when things are great and the sun is shining, we should give thanks that we are butterflies. In critical moments, on days when things are very difficult, we are also heavenly butterflies.

In the most difficult moments of our lives, we as new creatures in Christ can experience endless wonder and faith without limit. “Just when the caterpillar thought its life was over” an unknown philosopher pens, “it became a butterfly.”

What a moment it must have been between the darkness of the cocoon and the breaking into light of day! For the butterfly, for us, in the first time it happens, and in every subsequent time darkness becomes light.

Perhaps part of that confusion is our failure to see that God’s love and power are unlimited. We flutter and flail for a few hours, and when darkness comes, we

think that that is all there is. As Carl Sagan writes, “We are like butterflies who flutter for a day and think it is forever.”

Another butterfly gift offers is perspective beyond the moment. It is a great gift that only God can offer. Strength for tomorrow begins with knowing that eternity is ours. A day, a week, a thousand years, they are all the same in God’s sight. We must learn to appreciate past, present, and future as remarkable gifts from God which give us the “color and design” on our wings of faith.

The next time you see a butterfly, think of the God who made that fragile creature not just for itself, but for us. It is part of the marvelous canvas of faith that God paints moment by moment, century by century.

Just think of it. Thousands of years ago someone stood and watched the butterfly flutter past. Today we see the very same sight, with an updated background. And thousands of years later it can encourage and lift a spirit not yet born as these words are written.

A third thinkable butterfly thing is flight. So fly, dear readers. Do not think that crawling around on the ground is our lot. Know that you were born again to fly to the heights only God can show us. Know that love is greater than humanity can fashion, that plans are much higher than anyone can dream of, and that the future is in the sure hands of the One who made all of us butterflies.

How does one become a butterfly? she asked, “Trina Paulus writes in her book, *Hope of the Flowers*. “You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar.” For the Christian, that means giving up anger, selfishness, human desire. Throwing off the things that encumber and limit us, we are now able to fly to the heavenly heights.

The Christian faith calls us to move beyond existing. There are adventures to be lived, foreign lands to fly to, new flowers of friendship to enjoy. This is why we are created. As we travel together from day to day, from flower to flower, on the wings of the daily breezes and warmed by the heavenly Sunshine of Christ, there are new horizons to be crossed together.

“Just living is not enough,” said the butterfly. “One must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower.”

Here is one final butterfly thing. Irish blessings can cover many occasions, and they do not disappoint us here. I would replace luck with God's providence, and riches with fulfillment, but know not how to do it in the below meter.

May the wings of the butterfly kiss the sun
And find your shoulder to light on,
To bring you luck, happiness and riches
Today, tomorrow and beyond.

-Irish Blessing