



During my retreat this summer, I enjoyed sitting on a porch that overlooked a large pond. There happened to be a planter on the porch with three daisies – two were fully bloomed, while the third was still a bud. They caught my attention because daisies were my sister Helen’s favorite flower and I had two special experiences involving daisies the day of her funeral many years ago. My last evening on retreat, I noticed that the two fully bloomed flowers had now reached their peak and would start to wither, but the bud had finally expanded a little. The final morning of retreat I felt compelled to walk over to that porch again and check on the bud. Overnight it had nearly fully opened. I found this significant, even though I didn’t know what it meant for me in terms of my retreat.

One day after returning home from retreat, I found myself reflecting on those daisies. I considered how the opened, fully bloomed flower stays about a week or so before it begins to die. In contrast, most of the flower’s “lifetime” is spent on the earlier stages of growth – from seed, to stem and leaves, to bud, to full bloom. [Not being a botanist, I may not be exactly accurate here, but you know what I mean.] Comparatively, the culmination – the full bloom – lasts for only a short while.

The analogy to human beings and growth in the spiritual life became apparent to me. Typically, it takes a lifetime to come to full bloom, with most of one’s years spent on the earlier stages of growth. Moreover, much of this growth is so gradual that it can easily go unnoticed. But finally, there is the “full bloom.” What immediately came to mind next was the verse, “Es ist vollbracht” – the German rendition of John 19:30 of the passion narrative usually translated in English as “It is finished.” I was moved to check the Greek-English Interlinear New Testament where I found that the Greek “Τετέλεσται” is more literally translated “It is accomplished.”

Like Jesus’ life, we might think of our own lives as coming to “completion” once we have reached “full bloom” – when we have carried out our mission or when we have become all that God created us to be. [Of course, all analogies fall short, and we can quickly come up with examples where, humanly speaking, we would say that some lives never have the chance to fully bloom. But it’s impossible to speak for all of the “flowers” in God’s garden.]

At this point in time, my takeaway from my retreat experience concerning the daisies is this: to be ready to meet God is to be fully bloomed. I pray to be “fully bloomed” when it is time to meet God.



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