

Beyond Winter

Winter days of plentiful snow and lasting subzero temperatures leaves one hard put to imagine warm, bright, renewing spring days. With these challenging days comes the stories that makes ones heart cold: more bombings and deaths in Iraq; women and children caught in the web of human trafficking; torture being condoned by a democratic society; fears and hatred regarding Muslims flooding our emails and media.

The routine of smothering ones self in warm, heavy clothing makes looking about for hope difficult on a cold winter day. The habit of hearing and speaking only the negative without life giving action keeps one feeling self righteous and secure at home.



Yet trust in the goodness of life that lies ahead is the deep spark that

maintains and sets aflame the ability to move forward within the cold of darkness and emptiness.

It is essential to identify the sparks in life that continue to ignite and sustain the courage to move onward. Winter moving slowly and reluctantly toward spring seems a fitting time to ponder and appreciate these life giving forces we can rely on.

Moments of hope for me have been the dazzle of sun on fresh fallen snow after a day of winter storms, the daylight hours beginning to stretch out with later picture perfect sunsets, the first report that a robin has been sighted, the joy of planning a family summer picnic in the park. On the world scene, we hear of creative people developing programs of loans to the poor enabling self sufficiency and end to poverty; locally, we support food pantries, attend fundraisers for people in need, and are inspired by groups standing at corners weekly to proclaim the need for peace and end to war. Many are the signs of hope when we uncover our comfort and security to gaze about and to listen.



A special hopeful moment in this week has been the story of geranium seeds telling of life and determination after the death of a beloved one. This man had struggled to keep hope alive during years of illness. One effort was to join a garden club and delight in the fruitfulness of the earth in the growing season. To grow geraniums from seeds is tough business in northern Wisconsin; yet this hope filled gardener on a cold winter day, the day before his death, bought geranium seeds with expectations of a summer surprise of beauty. The family holds on to these small seeds as a sign of a life fulfilled and still growing.

Today is a new day to look beyond winter into the possibilities that hope brings and to purchase our “geranium seeds” that will bring new life to our future through our concern and actions.