



Insane for the Light, A Spirituality for Our Wisdom Years, by Ronald Rolheiser

Week 1 -Preface

Check in Question: With the wisdom of 50+ years behind you, can you share an accomplishment that has shaped who you are today?

Opening Prayer

Fr. Rolheiser begins this book, with a poem by Johann Wolfgang vonGoethe, let's use it for our opening prayer.

Tell a wise person, or else keep silent,
because the mass man will mock it right away.
I praise what is truly alive,
what longs to be burned to death.

In the calm water of the love-nights,
where you were begotten,
where you have begotten,
a strange feeling comes over you,
when you see the silent candle burning.

Now you are no longer caught in the obsession with darkness,
and a desire for higher love making sweeps you upward.

Distance does not make you falter.
Now, arriving in magic, flying,
and finally, insane for the light,
you are the butterfly and you were gone.
And so as you haven't experienced this: to die and so to grow,
you are only a troubled guest on the dark earth.

Reflection questions:

As you read through the following questions, select one or two that speak to you and be ready to share your reflection.

Preface

1. Fr. Rolheiser suggests that as we read Scripture at different stages of life, our understanding deepens and matures along with us. When have you experienced this in your own life?
2. How might we “become pregnant” and bring forth new life in a spiritual or non-biological way, even in the later years of our lives?
3. Fr. Rolheiser suggests that aging and dying can be understood as a kind of new birth. What are your thoughts or reflections on this idea?

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray...

Let us pray,
Loving God,
You who speak to us through every season of life,
Open our hearts to hear Your Word more deeply each day.
As we grow in years, let us grow in wisdom and understanding.
Teach us to bring forth new life in ways that bless others.
Help us to trust that even in aging, You are creating something new.
Give us peace in the mystery of change, growth, and letting go.
And lead us always into the fullness of life with You.
Amen.

Overview of our meetings

Week 1- Introduction

Week 2- Chapter 1: Spirituality and the Seasons of Our Lives

Week 3- Chapter 2: Some Anthropologies of Aging

Week 4- Chapter 3: The Challenge in Aging

Week 5- Chapter 4: Passivity as Generativity and Leaving Behind a Nurturing Spirit

Week 6- Chapter 5: The Modality and Darkness of Faith and Its Deeper Stages of Maturing

Week 7- Chapter 6: Forest Dwelling and Preparing to Find Our Beggars Hut

Week 8- Chapter 7: Finding Beggar's Hut and Giving our Deaths Away

Week 9- Chapter 8: Thoughts on the Afterlife

Week 10- Chapter 9: A Paradigm from a Christian Mystic