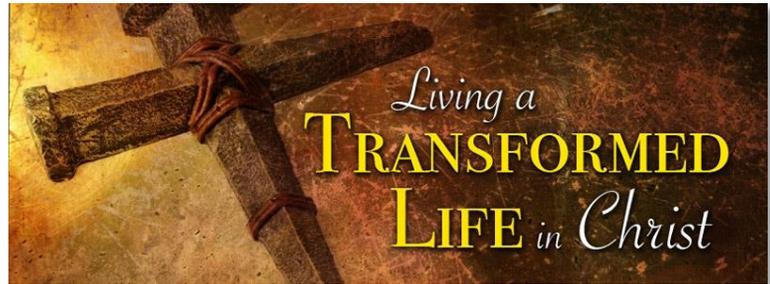


Transformed Lives

The Rev'd. Dr. John Roddam | www.pleromainternational.ca

Diocesan Times Article - May 2017

Jesus' Resurrection changed everything!! God has proven His power over sin and death. Wolfhart Pannenberg, renowned late 20th C. German Theologian, stated, "The most compelling argument for the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead was the transformed lives of His followers," That is still true today!



In one of my NS Parishes, I was approached by a young couple to "get their children done..." That's nominal ecclesiastical code for baptism. I've been tempted many times to respond "...medium-rare or well-done?" The young Father had lived a wild life but in the last few years had "settled down," married and was raising a family.

Also, the Lord was stirring in him an inquiring heart. He wanted to learn more "about God." I suggested a dangerous prayer – "Lord, if You're real, show me in a way that I'll understand and see that it is You!" Within 2 weeks, he was staunchly converted through an amazing series of events.

One evening, as I visited this family and reflected with this young man, he opined, "I would have become serious about this God thing but I didn't see any difference in my family members." His family was prominent in our parish and saw themselves as strong believers. However, the life of Jesus in them was dim to their own "black sheep" as he was known.

One preacher summed this up by stating, "If you were on trial for being a Christian; would there be enough evidence to convict you?" I've always found this a challenge personally. Do people around me see Jesus' love and character reflected through my life?

As Holly and I were getting settled into our first (four-point!) parish, getting to know the folks, one of the active parishioners approached me and said, "Father John, I just met your wife." I nodded... She added, "She's a person of strong religious convictions!" I nodded more vigorously. Then she stunned me with the following observation, "But she's such a nice person!"

Many people see Christians as small-minded, judgmental, and un-loving. What a contrast to the Gospel mandate to "grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ!" (2 Peter 3: 18)

This dynamic in our broader culture is overcome in two ways: Firstly, by deepening in our walk with Jesus, becoming more humble, loving and grace-filled. 1 John 4: 19 states – *We love because He first loved us!* As we get to know God's tenderness and love more and more in a personal way, it becomes reflected in our lives.



Secondly, for the public perception of believers to change, we need to engage those outside the Church. I've been amazed at the response of the unchurched in communities where we've served. Our lives lived out before others have broken down stereotypes. As a result, many have come to know Jesus and become enfolded in the Church.

Do I walk this out perfectly? NO!! I'm a work in progress in my journey with Jesus. In fact, when I make mistakes, it may be powerful for others to see how I own my own stuff and address the wrongdoing.

How are you doing?