

“The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds. The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.” Psalm 145:13b-16. (NRSV)

Dear Christian friends,

Faithful gardeners in Calgary live by the rule that outdoor planting should not occur prior to the May long-weekend. The risk of a killing frost is very likely prior to that date. Even after that time, only a foolish gardener will ignore the weather forecast in regards to potential frost occurrence until astronomic summer begins, and not take action. Still as the long season of winter shifts into spring-like weather many gardeners get antsy; they long to get digging in the soil and nurturing green growth. This gardening activity is done in anticipation of reaping some of the fruit of the earth later. As a gardening hobbyist, I admit I feel that antsy-ness that late winter or early spring can stir. So, frequently about mid-March I start puttering with soil and seeds.

I first noticed the appearance of crocus, tulip and daffodil shoots in my flower beds before mid-March. Those signs motivated me to sow tomato seeds indoors to get an advance start to the growing season. I have started tomato plants for the Sunday School children in previous years that they eventually can take home and plant in their gardens. The Sunday School children often are keenly interested in the germination and early growth of those plants. This year I seeded some at home and some at Church at the same time. My sowings at the Church simply would not germinate. After over two weeks waiting, I took them home to try there. Eventually most germinated but they are well behind development over all others. I still will attempt to nurture them to grow and accomplish that for which they are created.

The sowing and germination of those tomato seeds can be compared to the sowing and development of the Christian faith within us. For some that life and discipleship in Jesus as Christ can occur very early in life and be a bountiful harvest of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. For others, the germination may be longer and the development may be a harder struggle. In all this we can be assured of God’s promises. The Psalmist declared that universal provision of God for the daily necessities of earthly life. The season of Easter, which continues in the Church in these weeks, is that solid revelation to people, and reminder to Christians, of God’s ultimate commitment to the restoration and nurturance into the fullness of life for us.

We in our discipleship, like some of those tomato plants, may struggle to grow into the fullness of the image of Christ. But God will not abandon us. He has a plan for each of us as individuals in his divine drama. As mothers nurture and disciple their children, they long for those youngsters to grow into full, productive adulthood. So, God truly longs for us in our discipleship that follows Baptism. Meteorological Spring seems to be struggling to get established in our natural world this year. It will arrive and succeed.

The stirrings of new growth and the vibrancy of that growth the natural world will be revealed dramatically in the outdoor greenery in these coming days and weeks. That stirring and growth is always present in the baptized Christian through God’s Holy Spirit. May we recognize and rejoice in that goodness of God’s provision for the fullness of our life.

In Christ forever,

Pastor Kevin.