

153 fishes!

+ Edward Hays

My college classmate and room mate in 1954 at Conception College Missouri, was buried Friday in Leavenworth Kansas.

How fortunate for me that in my life span I have had two of the best religious writers in the USA as friends, mentors, and inspiring models: Edward Hays and Joyce Rupp.

Last week I was interviewed by the National Catholic Reporter and I said this of Ed:

"He was a blithe spirit, an uplifting person who brought inspiration and encouragement to people's lives so they could walk a path of beauty. He himself walked a beauty path."

And perhaps the last writing of Ed's was when he did me a big favor and wrote a recent review for my book: *The Amazing Love of Dogs and God*."

[You can google Ed Hays and learn about his 30 books.]

R.I.P.

153 Fishes

The Gospels quite seldom go into details. We do not even have a physical description of the apostles, and yet John is careful to record the exact number of fishes caught in this wonderful post resurrection story!

The Gospel is a charming three tiered story about a lakeside picnic hosted by the Risen Lord.

Secondly he commissions Peter as the chief shepherd for his flock.

And thirdly he talks to Peter about the final years of Peter's life which is so applicable to all who age.

"...when you get old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go..."

Yesterday Rosemary and I visited our 92 year old former neighbor Dorothy to wish her a Happy Passover. She now is wheeled about and dwells in a place so far away from all her friends. And she is resigned to these changes, and endures them.

Richard Rolheiser a wonderful spiritual writer wrote the following about the last stages of life:

"In a deeply insightful book, *The Grace of Dying*, Karhleen Dowling Singh shares insights she has gained as a health professional from being present to hundreds of people when they are dying. Among other things, she suggests that the dying process, itself, in her words "is exquisitely calibrated to automatically produce union with Spirit."

In essence, what she is saying is that the dying process— particularly if the death itself is not a sudden one, is a purgation that naturally lessens the person's grip on the things of this world, as well as on her or his ego, so as to be able to enter a new realm of life and

meaning beyond our present world of consciousness. The dying process she writes:
"midwife's us into a wider, deeper life."

"But that does not come without a weighty price tag. The dying process is not a pleasant one."

"When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you, and lead you where you do not wish to go.."

But our Easter faith affirms that the darkness of Good Friday was the closest to the Easter Dawning.

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