

## Felicity Jane Fraser

When Anne Riggs told me about the theme of 'Butterflies' in today's service for Felicity, I must say that I was quite delighted. After all, the butterfly is the great symbol of the resurrection in this Holy Week when we celebrate the highlight of our Christian faith – the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Today we celebrate the fact that Felicity, like the butterfly, enjoys the fullness of the resurrection in being completely with God.

I can remember that great journalist, Caroline Jones, once writing about learning the life-cycle of the butterfly at her Murrurundi Primary School – how she was fascinated by its four distinct stages of egg, caterpillar, cocoon, adult butterfly. She wrote: "One day when the temperature was right, the shiny casing of the caterpillar split open, and out climbed a vision of exquisite delicacy. You held your breath while it trembled momentarily, before taking flight, reborn with the triumph of wings. I saw the magic of it, but it never occurred to me to take it as a metaphor of life, a symbolic map of the journey on which I was embarking, all those years ago at Murrurindi Primary."

This is what we call the Passion Pattern in life. It is not dissimilar to the words of Bette Midler: *"When the night has been too lonely and the road has been too long, and you think that love is only, for the lucky and the strong. Just remember in the winter, far beneath the bitter snow, lies the seed that, with the sun's love, in the spring becomes the rose."*

When I was teaching in Sydney, I met a wonderful young woman, Pam Baber was her name, who was a nurse from Mudgee and who struggled with Cancer for some 7 years. As part of her therapy, she decided to write a beautiful anthology of simple poetry which she titled 'Butterfly.' Let me share with you what she wrote under the heading of 'Prayer'.

At the beginning of last year  
My body was lean and strong  
My heart full of love,  
But my soul remained ill at ease.  
Awareness of this was as sudden and clear  
As the tumour had been on my scans.

Too often had I heard  
That suffering is born of sin,  
That our crosses  
Are carried in imitation of Christ.  
With this long-worn cloak of guilt,  
This duty to suffer,  
The image of God is harsh and distant.

But I have found He is gentle and near –

All around me and in me.

He is loving and merciful,  
And feels the pain that comes of humanity  
And the universe He created.  
There's no selection in what happens where,  
To whom.  
That's just life  
And God doesn't intervene.

I don't pray for miracles, just God's love.  
With that I'm strong and peaceful  
And see miracles all around me –  
In nature and science,  
In loving hearts and healing hands.  
I'm at peace with God,  
With myself and the universe.  
I am joyful and free  
And every breath is a prayer.

This weekend, millions of Christians will go to their Churches to enter into the 2000-year old story of Jesus Christ, man of love, nailed to the Cross, dead, buried, and amazingly risen to life. It is the story of the passion pattern in all our lives – for which the butterfly is the symbol – and which Felicity now understands and embraces in all its fullness.