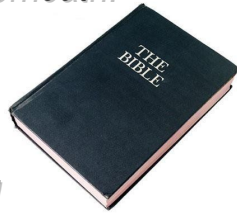


Check underneath.
You Win!
But
Please
Pray Again!



followers of Christ 

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Sunday Classes at 10:00 am ~ Sunday Worship at 11:00 am ~ Wednesday Bible Study at 7:00 pm

But lilies are temperamental and the number of producers plummeted until many proclaimed the industry was dead. Instead, it came back to life and, today, 95 per cent of all commercial bulbs are produced by just ten mega-farms along the California-Oregon border.

But cultivation is hard work spanning three or four years. Since the bulbs are never dormant, they need constant care to ensure quality and cleanliness. Still, lilies have a wholesale value of \$40 million a year.

Today, the resurrection is still a matter of faith or fable. Even some Christians believe it's a myth, no different from those of ancient Rome. The original story is too miraculous and offensive, so they strip away its essentials, lest they lead to intellectual impurity. To skeptics, the Bible is legend and the resurrection a mere symbol of finding meaning amid life's struggles, or of the good that lives on after death.

But comfort offered by a tomb that's full is empty. If Jesus didn't come back from the dead, we won't either. The Crucifixion becomes Cruci-fiction, and that kind of Cross is nothing to hang your life on. *"And if our hope in Christ is only for this world, we're more to be pitied than anyone in the world!"* says the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:19).

But the Bible stands by its eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Lord, including the testimony of many who endured torture and death. The victorious Christ still symbolizes purity, hope and new life. *"So... be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, or you know nothing you do for him is useless."* (v.58)

Yes, the church today is much diminished, having sometimes let money, opportunism and irrelevance take priority. Many proclaim its death. But there are already stirrings of new life and, in many places, the Body of Christ is rising with new power and renewed passion. The rigor has become vigour; the mortis is no more.

Within each of us, the restlessness of eternity is never dormant but it takes constant care if we're to achieve the inner quality and cleanliness the Lord demands. So find and learn to trust the people who will cultivate your spirit, until your very life exudes the fragrance of Christ.



RICK GAMBLE

~ sharing Jesus and the journey ~



Flower Power

The Easter lily industry has undergone a resurrection. But first, some background on a flower that embodies faith and fable.

According to Roman legend, white lilies sprang forth when Juno, queen of the gods, spilled milk while nursing her son, Hercules. Some of it stayed in the heavens – creating the Milky Way – but some fell to earth, becoming lilies.

In Christian mythology, lilies were said to originate from the repentant tears of Eve when they fell to the ground, or from drops of sweat shed by Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. But Jesus was more practical. *"Why worry about your clothing?"* he asked. *"Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully. And if God cares for wildflowers... he will certainly care for you."* (Matt. 6:28-30)

A symbol of God's provision lilies are also an Easter emblem of purity, hope and new life, their blooms shaped like Gabriel's trumpet that will announce the second coming of Christ. Interestingly, Victorians removed the stamens and pistils, thinking them too sexual and apt to prompt impure thoughts.

In the 1880s lilies were exported from Bermuda, then the Japanese took over. Americans got in on the action when soldier Louis Houghton took a suitcase of lily bulbs from Japan to Oregon in 1919. Many of his friends started growing the flowers as a hobby but, after Pearl Harbour, the value of lilies blossomed and many went into business growing "White Gold".

