

This meditation is from Nathan D. Mitchell, from the booklet, *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Easter* (by Liguori Publications).

A Reflection for Holy Week

The Festival of Falling Apart

In some regions of the Middle East, Jewish women preparing for Passover call it not the “feast of unleavened bread,” but the “festival of falling apart.” The name-change reflects the exorbitant amount of time and energy consumed during spring housecleaning. Such a thorough scrubbing and polishing probably originated in the obligation to make certain all remaining leaven was eliminated as Passover drew near. In this way, too, every household, however humble, could become a “place of worship” where families might gather to praise God’s goodness and share creation’s bounty as it bursts forth fresh in spring. At the same time, these physical acts embodied spiritual wisdom—strength renewed, vision regained, hope revisited, and communities reunited.

Strange as it may seem, falling apart lies at the core of spiritual growth. Yet this may sound counterintuitive, for both religious and cultural reasons. Isn’t “perfection” the goal of spiritual growth? Isn’t it the “American way” to reward success, getting ahead, and “having it all”? We have little love for deadbeats or “losers” and scant patience with people who “come unglued” in a crisis. And we hate the idea that large chunks of our lives may need to be spent in remediation, retooling, or “bottoming out.” The thought that we may need to start over—*more than once*—seems preposterous. Still, “starting over” is what this week is about. It’s about God’s audacious gamble: What if the world fell apart and I started it anew? What if a “new creation” begins in the bleeding body of a man executed among criminals? What if God’s other name is Servant? Could anything—or anyone—ever be the same?

Falling in love with God may mean falling apart.