



Hope In Chaos

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Rachel Yates

The two shelves are side-by-side. One is neatly organized. The books are stacked by number in the series, the bindings evenly touching. The other shelf used to be that way. The books that could not fit on the first shelf carried over to the second. At some point, four books toppled over. Now they lay like fallen dominoes, precariously poised to tumble off the shelf and knock me on the head. I should fix them. I should prop them back up, making sure the numbers are still in the right sequence and bindings straight.

I haven't touched the books though. I find them oddly hopeful. For someone who gets obsessive about pictures hanging crooked on the wall, this is saying a lot.

In some way, they remind me of how chaos intrudes despite all my efforts to keep things as they "should be." They remind me that order is fleeting. They remind me that what I least expect will break through and change everything. For reasons I can't entirely explain, that gives me hope. So, I leave the books as they are.



This past Easter Sunday, the unexpected burst through again as it does every year, thanks be to God! During Holy Week, we heard again the strategic plans for quelling an insurrection laid out by Jewish leaders and supported by governing authorities and soldiers. It had played out in a predictable fashion: accusations, a contorted trial, and an execution. The plan was that Jesus, the rabble-rouser, would be killed. With it, his ragtag band of followers would disperse, and the systems of power would be preserved. It was all very tidy and organized.

Instead, their best-laid plans tumbled like dominoes. The stone was rolled away, and the tomb was empty! Not even the tried-and-true sentence of death proved reliable that day, for the will of God disrupted mankind's plans and brought forth salvation through resurrection.

The will of God can feel chaotic when it messes with our plans. When we least expect it, our ordered intentions of how things should be – or will be – are scrambled. Trusting that God's will is always good, however, we can take hope in the chaos.

But then there's that *other* type of chaos – chaos that God's hand has not wrought and that simply falls off the shelf and knocks us on the head. It brings everything from inconvenience to devastation. Perhaps those books on my shelf represent a warning, too. They are reminders that we control very little for very long.

In this Easter season, as we release our false grip of control, let us proclaim joyfully that no force – planned or unpredicted – can overcome God's ultimate intention. Through discernment, may we align ourselves with God's will and ride the chaos with hope.