

Letter 652a  
**Where The Holy Tree Grows**  
 2017-12-31

Dear **Jesus**,

When I was young I read a novel called Where The Red Fern Grows. Later on I saw the movie in a theater, and then on TV. It is the true story of a young boy, Billy, who wanted hound dogs. He received his desire, and then proceeded to do what young boys and hound dogs do; go out in the woods and play, and hunt for raccoons. He had named his two hound dogs Old Dan and Little Ann. Later on Old Dan and Little Ann passed away. Some time after that Billy noticed a red fern was growing just by the graves of his two beloved dogs. This spoke to Billy since the Red Fern was part of an old Indian legend which he knew. A brief quote from Wikipedia.com says this about the legend:

*“He goes to visit Old Dan and Little Ann's graves and finds a giant red fern between them. According to Native American legend, **only an angel can plant one**. He feels ready to move on knowing that his dogs are always going to be remembered.”*

I was reminded of this because something similar happened to me.

When (M) and I first met at work, and then started dating, we both had cats. (M) had two cats, Dickens and Elspeth. I had two cats. One named Scotty, after Mr. Scott from Star Trek, and the other named Spock, after Mr. Spock, for the same reason.

After we married and moved into the house we now live in, we were both down to one cat each, Elspeth, and Spock.

A few years later Elspeth passed away. We live on a 1/4 acre wooded lot, and there is a small cluster of trees in the back yard which made sort of an alcove close to our bedroom window. So I made a Pet Memorial area as a place to lay our pets to rest. Elspeth was the first pet to be so interred.

While I was digging Elspeth's grave, (M) was watching through the bedroom window. After a few minutes she couldn't take it anymore and burst into tears. After I filled in the grave and tamped down the last shovel full of dirt, I stopped and just looked for a moment.

That's when my attention was drawn to a green sprig of a plant growing out of the ground, hardly a foot from where I had just laid Elspeth to rest.

It was a sapling sprig of a Holly Tree.

This was important for several reasons. Christmas is (M)'s favorite Holiday, and holly is a prominent Christmas decoration. The male holly tree speaks of Jesus. It is the male Holly Tree that has the red berries, symbolizing the Blood of the Lamb. The Holly Tree is also an

evergreen, which speaks of Eternal Life. And the thorns speak of the piercings Jesus took for the whole world.

When I saw the Holly Tree sapling, I immediately remembered the story of the Red Fern, and was comforted both for (M) and myself, knowing the the Lord had arranged to have it grow there at just the right place, and at just the right time

The word "Holly" is a derivative of the word "Holy". Christmas therefore is the King of Holy Days.

After my motorcycle wreck, digging graves became too difficult, so there are only three pets laid to rest in the alcove. Elspeth the cat, already mentioned, Asta the Miniature Schnauzer, and one of her offspring, Astaella.

Blessings...

R. C. Theophilus