

Easter Message 2019

As I write, we have no certainty about what will be happening in our country as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus: will we have dropped out of the EU with no deal with whatever political, social and economic upheaval that that may bring; will we have asked for an extension, long or short; will we be preparing for another referendum or general election; will we have revoked article 50? Who knows?

What we do know is that our political landscape will never be the same. Whatever transpires, the comfortable assumptions we have lazily made about British fair play and integrity have been exposed and we have to learn afresh how to ensure a political, economic and social system that works for us all and create a public space where truth telling is valued and upheld.

Holy Week calls us all back to honesty and to brutal reality. As we read the scriptures afresh once more from Palm Sunday and each day through Holy Week, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, we are called to set aside myths, magic and religion.

As we watch Jesus confronting the religious and political leaders with the stark reality of God's kingdom, in which he lived and moved and had his being, and see their manoeuvrings and excuses, we have to face again the inescapability of the nails and the brutality of the cross as the place where God's kingdom and human constructs meet.

Many of us this year will have lived through pain and suffering that we did not choose and could hardly bear, knowing that God walks with us, but also hardly knowing how that is supposed to help. Holy Week, Good Friday and Holy Saturday remind us that we are called to endure.

As Christians, by God's grace, we are called to listen for the call of God's patient, gentle love and come what may to follow its tune. Sometimes all we can do is hold on, sometimes rage, but sometimes rejoice and dance at the glimpses of resurrection and redemption.

This school of the yearly remembrance of Jesus' patient endurance and crucifixion culminates, this year as every year in the terrifying, unsettling news:

“He is not here, he is risen... he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.”

When God raised Jesus from death, it was the beginning of the making real of the promise held out to us in the Revelation to St John 21:5, “Behold I make all things new.” In the death of Mary’s son Jesus, the power of sin and death have been neutered.

In the resurrection of Jesus, God’s unending, unstoppable Life breaks into our here and now and calls us to face the reality of the love of God with repentance and hope, to receive the love of God with gratitude and joy and to share the love of God in simplicity and faith.

As we follow again Jesus’ path to Calvary and shout once more the Easter cry, “Alleluia He is risen,” let us have the courage, one day at time, to find him in our Galilees and to live His Risen Life, in faith and hope and love, whatever the future holds.

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