

HE IS RISEN

We can't arrive at Easter Morning without remembering where we've been. Our Lenten journey starts on Ash Wednesday, then we weave our way to the chaos of Palm Sunday, experience the grief and darkness of Good Friday. The crucifixion and the resurrection must be held together. Too often, we have treated the resurrection as an antidote for suffering and pain. The empty tomb of easter Sunday gives us a guarantee of a life with no tears, no anguish, no more despair. The easter story somehow answers our questions about life after death, and this become the focus of our belief and faith. this however, isn't all there is though, our faith is founded on the possibility of life before death, not simply a promise of life after death.

We can't talk about life in all its fullness unless we desire that for all people following Jesus' teaching model of abundant love and compassion. Participation in the resurrection is about being fully involved in life in all its messiness and pain. It isn't the job of communities of faith to offer an escape from the suffering that is part of being human, but rather to create spaces where it can be acknowledged and worked through.

It isn't enough to simply believe in the resurrection; to believe the tomb was empty, to affirm that Jesus was physically brought back to life. As followers of Jesus' way, we must *become* the resurrection. At the tomb, Jesus asked Mary why she was crying and not to hold on to him. In the same way we can't hold onto the risen Christ like a prop; we must run to tell others. It's up to us to keep telling and retelling the inspirational story of the resurrection, as well as the before and after part of the story.

Today we've gathered with hearts full of joy, wonder, and grateful praise as we celebrate Easter—the day the tomb was found empty and the risen Christ made himself known to the world.

John invites us into a sunrise moment: Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb, sees the stone rolled away, and runs to tell Peter and the other disciple that something is not right. But the brightest truth unfurls when Jesus appears to Mary in the garden, speaks her name, and calls her to witness the foundational reality of our faith: He is alive. This is not a distant mystery. It is a living reality that changes how we live today, in every ordinary moment and in every joyful gathering we call church, and will continue when we go to meet our family, and friends.

Easter is more than an event on the calendar. It is the invitation to see with new eyes, to hear with new assurance, and to love with a transformed heart. In the early hours of that morning, fear could have frozen the disciples in their rooms. Yet the scripture tells us something radiant and contagious: the life of Christ, once encountered, compels movement, proclamation, and mission. When Mary discovers the empty tomb, she runs to share the news, and the ripple of astonishment begins to spread. The church, built on the witness of those first messengers, continues to testify that love, light, and life have a name—Jesus.

Consider what it means that the community keeps the love of Christ alive. The gospel isn't a private flame, but a communal ember that must be fanned, tended, and shared. When we gather—in homes, in sanctuaries, in streets and online—we don't simply celebrate a memory. We participate in a present reality: the risen Christ who sustains us, guides us, and calls us to be agents of his love in a broken world. The love of Christ

isn't a sentiment to be cherished in a quiet corner; it's a force that reshapes relationships, heals wounds, and breaks down barriers. It's a love that must be noticed by the world, a love that looks for ways to serve, to listen more deeply, to walk alongside those who suffer, and to generously give of our time, our resources, and our very selves.

In this Easter message, the light of Christ shines through the community when we choose to reflect him in practical ways. Light is not mere decoration on a Sunday morning; it is the presence of Christ shining through us as we bring hope where there is despair, truth where there is confusion, and mercy where there is hurt. When families gather around tables that have been opened to strangers, when neighbors are welcomed into shared meals, when hands are reached out in acts of generosity—these are the moments when the light of the resurrection becomes tangible. The light isn't a private glow it's a shared beacon, drawing others toward the truth that death is defeated and grace reigns.

And then there is life—the dynamic, transforming power of the risen Jesus at work in us. Easter proclaims that death has been swallowed up in victory, and that victory is not merely for a future day but for today. The life of Christ, once encountered, becomes the energy of our daily living: a life that forgives, a life that pursues reconciliation, a life that risks with hope, a life that serves without counting the cost. The resurrection life is visible when we choose to forgive rather than cling to bitterness, when we choose patience over pride, when we choose to give our time to the vulnerable, and when we anchor our hopes in the promises of God rather than in the shifting tides of fear.

The Mary in the garden becomes a model for us. She runs to tell the good news, even in the midst of confusion and fear. Her instinct is to share what she has seen and heard: that Christ is

alive, that her Savior speaks her name, that a new reality has begun. The disciples respond in their own ways—one with awe, another with uncertainty—but the shared conviction that Jesus is risen begins to knit their hearts together. It is this knit become a community—the church—that makes the Easter message tangible across generations. When we proclaim the risen Christ to our neighbours, when we sing songs that lift hearts, when we recall the promises of scripture with gratitude, we are living out the Easter story in real time.

So, this Easter, I pray we notice how our community keeps the love, light, and life of Christ alive. May we ask ourselves: How are we nurturing a love that moves beyond sentiment to sacrifice? How are we letting Christ's light shine brightly in the darkest corners of our city and our own hearts? How are we nurturing the life of Christ in tangible acts of mercy, justice, and hope? The answer is found in the ordinary, faithful faithfulness: daily prayers, generous hospitality, listening ear, and brave honesty about our own need for grace.

As we celebrate today, may our praise be buoyant, our gratitude deep, and our commitment strong. May every sister and brother, every child and elder, feel the invitation of the resurrection calling us to a mission of joy: to be witnesses that Christ is alive, to live as a community that loves without limits, and to shine the light of the risen Savior into a world that longs for good news.

Christ is risen. He is not distant; he is here, among us, within us, and through us. Let the Easter joy spill into every corner of our lives, and let the world notice—Jesus is alive, and because of that, love, light, and life continue to reign. Happy Easter to all. May this day echo in our days ahead as a living testimony of the risen Lord.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we thank you for the miracle of Easter and the faithful witness that makes us brave. As we carry the joy of the risen Christ into our week, deepen our love, widen our mercy, and enlarge our courage to serve. Make us faithful stewards of light, peace, and hope, binding us together in unity and humility. Fill our mouths with praise and our hands with good works, until the world tastes and sees that you live forever. Amen.