

Encouragement Encouragement



April 2021 – Issue 117

A Way... forward?

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Do we not all need a resurrection? Jesus Died and Rose to sign to us that one day... ONE Day we will rise from the dead and be with Him for all eternity. This will be a joyful day and all the tears, anguish will end (Revelation 21:4).

Once again, this year, Easter is not as usual, with restrictions because of the pandemic. But we all need that Resurrection. We can all dream as Pope Francis said, and yes, we must for the human spirit requires hope and a Christian is one who is always hope-filled. So what if we consider another type of resurrection, a transforming one in our lives. We may not have experienced death as a Society, though so sadly many thousands of people and their families have had bereavement and this year has been a mournful one – but we can also examine the way we approach, with cautious hope, and faith, and look at, and face the future...

As a society – world-wide, we have, on and off, been put into a deep sleep and slumber. Like a giant who had been forced to hibernate, and is just peeking out into the sunshine, and in these lengthening days we are trying to see what is going on: Questioning whether it will last; questioning is this really a springtime? There are numerous ways in which this hibernation has affected us – many of which may stay with us for a long while such as fear and anxiety. However, let us look at the ways that we can become Easter people, Resurrection people and look forward to a better tomorrow.

While we have experienced so many depravations, isolation, loss of work, unemployment, poverty and lack of resources, food and loss of physical contact, those precious hugs, and handshakes, there have also been signs of hope. We have discovered that each person matters and is precious. There have also been things that have made us ‘wake up’ to things that we perhaps would rather not think about when all is going well. These, for a Christian are both a challenge and a duty – so that we do not bury them again and return to

old ways that did not bring joy and contentment to God’s people.

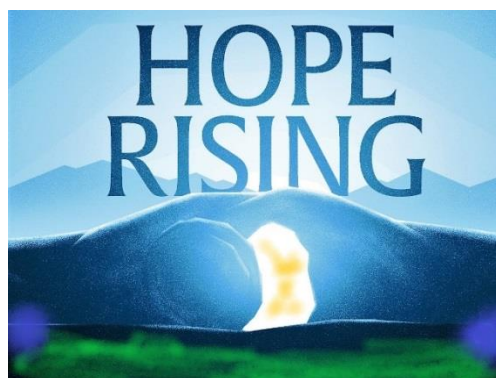
There is no doubt that what has been exposed in lockdowns are the inequalities in our society. One of these is employment as one man put it to me ‘I suddenly realised that while I am stuck at home – I have work, I am paid, and I am in privileged position – not so, may people of my age with families’. Work has been a challenge at this time and as well as this, what defines work and how it is to be conducted. Is it essential to have a place of work, and what about other work environments? Many people discovered through necessity other gifts and talents, some in artistic fields

and in communal activities perhaps accessing media. Mankind is always reflecting the creativity of the Creator. As workplaces begin to open again do we need to look carefully at what has been normal for generations and look at different ways of working and together. In a way the pandemic has done what some have argued a long while back,

a revisiting of the way we work. Some people have enjoyed more time with family and found this helpful notably this is often expressed by children. While the stresses and strains of family life in a confined space have exposed other issues including abuse... Perhaps we should continue to explore what is beneficial for all people and the purpose of work.

Who can forget the quietness of the first lockdown and hearing the sound of silence and the dawn chorus perhaps the first time in years? This touched many people and again there are questions to be asked about our relationship with what God created and in so many ways we have despoiled, causing us to live with a constant threat of climatic changes and dangers. Should we become more aware and commit ourselves to change, another aspect of waking up and being reborn.

Other inequalities have been exposed too such as our relationship with people who we see as different to us. The issue of racial harmony and prejudice has revealed much of the existing hurts that exist and



“I am the Resurrection and the Life”

deep and complex issues that have been largely hidden, How we relate to each other is crucial to how we love one another. As Christians we are bound to extend the hospitality of the heart to all people and promote justice and acceptance for all people. Our world is composed of different languages, culture and people. These things can disturb us and be something that we prefer not to think about, but surely if we follow Jesus, we must look at the whole issue of tolerance. Jesus clearly helped all people often, the most despised and rejected - and not in any patronising way. He restored dignity. Likewise the imbalance and lack of genuine understanding of the rôle and acceptance of men and women has required a deeper understanding of complementarity and well as giftedness.

Poverty ...is that big word that has been thrust upon us in these times. We have become more aware of the massive differences of people's resources and incomes. How can we forget the lack of food experienced by many a mother sacrificing food in order to feed their children and fathers desperate to provide for their families and feeling humiliated at not being able to do so? The very divided nature of our Society has had a bright light shone upon it. We have also seen massive generosity of spirit and self-sacrifice shown by young and old alike in helping others. This helping of one to another has been a demonstrative indication that it can be done. Such actions have been both a blessing and an opening of a door to change. We can build a better society if we grasp the possibilities. A note too for those whose continued to think of others in distant places fearlessly serving the poor even at risk to their lives. This can all be continued in the future and kindness and generosity have flourished and we are called to maintain this.

We are sociable animals and so many have become even more aware of how much we need each other. Families have missed each other. Friends have missed each other. Communities have become self-aware as have the needs of the more vulnerable let us work to serve them better. We have become aware of the importance of touch and face contact. Our heart and our minds too have been affected, sometimes detrimentally through loneliness. Let us recognise that the core of resurrection is Love itself. Finally, as Christians we have been challenged by church closures and the necessity of praying together and of the different ways that we have to pray and not to give up...

Our Communities have been depleted and there has been a kind of 'lostness' that hit many churches as communal prayer and worship has been difficult.

Let us not abandon the need to pray as communities and remember that without prayer we can do nothing, as without God we can do nothing. Let this Easter be a true resurrection of the heart and let us not all too easily forget what we have learnt and what challenges us.

Have a joy filled Easter and let us pray for each other in Hope.

Halina Holman



Pope Francis. Post Pandemic

The world instead must be "fraternally united" to face common threats without resorting to "counterproductive recriminations, the exploitation of problems, short sighted nationalism, propaganda, isolationism and other forms of political selfishness." The world won't be the same after the pandemic, he insisted men and women can turn "this time of trial" to "a time of wise and farsighted choices for the good of all humanity." Rome. March 2021

Reflection

There is nothing more man needs than Divine Mercy, that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights to the holiness of God. St. Pope John Paul II



Jesus I trust in You!



Feast Days in April

1st Maundy Thursday

2nd Good Friday (Fasting & Abstinence)

3rd Holy Saturday

4th Easter Sunday

5th to 10th Octave of Easter

11th 2nd Sun. Divine Mercy Sunday

12th St. Martin

16th St. Bernadette

18th Third Sunday of Easter

21st St. Anselm

23rd St. George, Patron of England

24th St. Adelbert

25th Fourth Sunday of Easter

28th St. Peter Chanel

29th St. Catherine of Siena, Patron of Europe