

By the time this article is circulated, we will fast be approaching another Easter Day, the key day in our Christian faith, a day like no other. We arise with Jesus Christ to say, “Alleluia He is Risen, He is risen indeed, Alleluia!”

We then become an Easter people, and journey on our own Resurrection life. But what exactly does that mean? Surely, aren't we above all else an “Easter people”, who do not live simply in the light of the cross? Jesus Christ is not there. The tomb is empty, He is not to be found among the dead. We proclaim, “Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed!”

But can it be tempting to think of Jesus crucified on the cross as what is most ‘realistic’, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ seem fanciful? No, because while still holding on to the realism of the suffering and death there, we now must allow ourselves to go beyond to what is most real - the Resurrection life. Christ's rising from the dead really happened and everything because of that is changed and Easter becomes the dawn of a new and everlasting realism where what becomes most real is a love shown even unto death; a love that overcomes death. The reality of Jesus' bodily resurrection is the core challenge to the world and the hope of our faith. This is no mere metaphor, no simple symbol, no made-up story, or disembodied idealism. The empty tomb announces with incomparable realism that God is committed to and invests in our whole existence. In Jesus Christ crucified and risen the reality of God's creative action has broken into our material world, filling it with life-giving spirit, transforming all our metaphors and symbols, our stories and ideals, our concerns, worries, and fears. In the Resurrection the very matter and essence of our universe overflows with God's presence where the material and spiritual are interwoven,

where God's transcendence comes down to the ordinary and wells up again as extraordinary.

Jesus' resurrected body sends a living flame through all matter because the Resurrection is the event where the transformation of matter begins, where every atom is given its true vocation: to become an intimate gift of personal love from God its Creator.

Just as the disciples on the first Easter day, became the first Easter people, we must encounter and take in the realism of the new life of the Resurrection and share it through personal witness, relationships, and community.

As an Easter people, we are marked by the life-giving joy of a love stronger than death, an Easter people called to celebrate that joy and rejoice wherever there is love, an Easter people called to love tenderly whenever we are faced with violence, suffering and death. We are an Easter people who, with our hearts and bodies transformed by Christ's resurrection body, are called to show how everybody matters, because they are loved, with a love stronger than death.

May I wish you all as Easter people the blessing of the Risen Christ.

Rev James.