

*Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King  
His love endures forever*



Dear Beloved in Christ,

I love this time of year as we shake off the remnants of Winter and Spring beckons. It is wonderful to see the golden daffodils and the blossoms on the trees. Spring heralds warmer days, brighter mornings. There is so much that looks promising in the garden – new life is palpable.

And yet, the media is full of death, hatred, old ways of settling differences in the human family. Once again, dialogue takes second place to cluster bombs and missiles. Once again, the toxic rhetoric grows hour by hour and the voice of peace seems a mere whisper. The promise we see in nature is not echoed in our human discourses.

How bleak things must have seemed to the women hurrying to the tomb on that first Easter day! The person whom they loved and had followed faithfully had been cruelly executed. All their hopes, all their dreams had disappeared in an instant. They must have thought “Ah well, nothing will change. God has forgotten us – God has abandoned us.” It is easy for us to think that too as communities are reduced to rubble and lives are torn apart in the Middle East, in Africa, and in every other conflict that rages unabated. But God had neither forgotten nor abandoned the forlorn group of women mourning the crucified Jesus. Death did not have the last word and neither does war.

Easter is a constant light as we long for a world where discourses do not always end in conflict. Where women and girls can know freedom from sexual exploitation. Where the Good News isn't an aspiration but a reality which Christians seek to nurture in their lives and in their communities. What does the Good News look like in our churches and Circuits? What does Good News mean in our workplaces and neighbourhoods? It is possible to glimpse that reality people gather to seek common ground. We can see that reality when a community lunch becomes the place of reconciliation.

I wonder if going to the tomb, on that first Easter day, was in itself more real, more in keeping with God's ways than those women could ever have imagined. A prayerful act of defiance in the face of all the cruelty of the Roman Empire and the powers that be. What does prayerful defiance look like for us?

The hope for a better world is part of the Easter message. God has not forgotten us – God, in Jesus, has not abandoned us.

*When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,  
Then your touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.*  
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May God's peace be a reality for you this Easter.

