

In the name of the resurrected Lord God Almighty. Amen.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Easter 2020. Normally on Easter Sunday I start my service by saying, "The Lord is risen." Hallelujah And then my congregation would say, Yes, "The Lord is risen indeed," Hallelujah. But today I am missing my congregation & this response from them. This Years 2020's Easter is completely different, different to anything we have ever experienced before. Instead of coming together for the Sun rise service & main service, we have to stay at homes.

As I understand, Easter, symbolises Renewal of Hope, a rebirth, and most of all, a celebration, and a victory of Life over death and destruction. On one hand we are missing what was previously a Normal routine for us in daily life, & we have already missed Easter seasonal routine, such as, Lenten Bible Study, Holy Week Services, Walk on Palm Sunday & Good Friday Walk. Unfortunately, COVID 19 has affected our lives in many ways. It has effortlessly transcended, borders, race, gender, social and economic classes, religion, & beliefs. It is a virus, that has made us all equal in our vulnerability, & still reminding us of our common frailty as human beings. Who thought, that weapons and means, used by humanity, to fight enemies, and disease could in such a short period of time become useless!

For our survival we have simply gone back to basic hygiene, and how we relate to each other as human beings. Indeed, who could have imagined an Easter where Christians do not congregate to commemorate the death and resurrection of Christ? Yet, in the midst of all this painful uncertainty, it is easy to get caught up in worry and anxiety trying to keep up with everything that is happening around us. There are already scholars and large consulting firms, predicting life after CO-VID

19. There was a programme on BBC telling us what life would be like, in the UK after this Pandemic. New world will be emerging soon.

Let's Ponder together, a passage from the Bible, In the Gospel of John 12: 24, Jesus says, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit*". This passage tells us how, the process of bearing fruit, can multiply! This is a painful reality when translated into human life, yet it might help, to put our minds at ease when applied to the current situation in the world. If we want to bear fruit, if we want to multiply, if we have to have impact... the old habits, patterns, familiarity have to "die" ... As individuals, members, elders and leaders, we all want to bear fruit, to grow our organisations, our mission outreach activities, to have an impact, to thrive and continue to be relevant to our communities. Yet to achieve this, we have to be open to the fact that we need to let 'die' our old habits, tradition & systems to let resurrection happen in our own spiritual lives.

A new us, a new Church, indeed a new world will emerge out of the current pain and uncertainty. A lesson that has been reinforced in these circumstances is the reality, that our lives will no longer be about having or doing, but about BEING... just being ... and in BEING, finding comfort in the deep understanding that the bonds we share as the body of Christ, are stronger and deeper bonds, than the logo or even the words of our mission statement. There are bonds that remain unbroken even in times like these where death is a threat. Let this hope keep us going; that the collapse & dying of old ways, and the emergence of new ones will only serve, to multiply us, like *a grain of wheat falls into the earth*. It is the message of hope & resurrection, I think people desperately need to hear this message of hope right now,"

Let me take this opportunity to encourage you, to pray that our celebrations of Easter will still honour, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Let us also continue to pray for families who have lost loved ones in this pandemic, especially the family of our own church member Rena Dalziel who has passed away because of Coronavirus.

Please Pray for those who have fallen ill that they may make a full recovery including our Prime Minister that he will be restored to full health.

Pray for our National Health Service and the many dedicated doctors, nurses and associated staff who seek to treat, comfort and bring healing to their patients, whether they have the virus or other medical conditions.

Pray for the many people who are committed to ensuring that our needs can be met in the emergency services, in shops, in stores and in many other areas.

Let us also pray for the thousands of volunteers up and down the nation who are seeking to help those less fortunate, than themselves as well as the vulnerable folk in our society.

Let us also pray for those who have to conduct funerals in these changed circumstances where the absence of wider family & friends, makes the grieving for families so much more painful, and where funeral arrangements have to be made sometimes by electronic means; pray for a special sensitivity and compassion for everyone who has that responsibility.

Finally, let us draw closer to God & continue to do a prayerful meditation. Pray that God will inspire each one of us to think and explore new ways to share the wonder of Easter with our families, friends and the folk we might come into contact with, from a safe distance. I pray that each one of us will have a special sense of God's presence in this time of Easter.

Now I invite you to pause for a while; be still & trust in the power of the resurrection, confess & admit your faults & frailties, as we reflect to make sense, what is really happening and about to happen around...