

[Episcopal News Service] This is the Most Rev. Sarah Mullally's first ecumenical Easter letter as archbishop of Canterbury.

*"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).*

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Christ is risen! Alleluia.

At Easter the Church proclaims the truth at the very heart of our faith: Christ has conquered death, and through him new life has begun. The resurrection of Jesus is not only an event remembered; it is a living reality that shapes our hope, our witness, and our shared calling as Christians. It gives us confidence – deep, unshakeable confidence – in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This hope is not abstract. We proclaim it in a world marked by deep suffering and conflict. We think of those living amid war and violence – across the Middle East, in Ukraine, in Sudan, and in so many other places of conflict – and of the churches of the Holy Land, bearing faithful witness under immense strain. We remember all who are displaced, oppressed, or forgotten, and we renew our calling as Christians to stand with the marginalised and to serve those most in need.

In such a world, the mystery of Easter speaks with particular depth. Writing from prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflected that "only a suffering God can help." These words give us pause. They remind us that in Jesus Christ, God does not stand distant from human pain, but enters into it, bears it, and transforms it. The cross stands firm while the world changes. Empires rise and fall, cultures shift, and societies transform, yet the love of God revealed in Christ crucified and risen remains constant.

The cross and the empty tomb together tell us that suffering and death do not have the final word. Suffering and pain are penultimate; ultimate is the loving embrace of God in glory. Easter proclaims that even in the darkest places, God is at work bringing life.

At Lambeth Palace, the signs of spring offer a quiet echo of this mystery. The gardens are beginning to blossom again – what seemed dormant is now filled with colour and promise. In the courtyard, the magnolia has put on a breathtaking display, its blossoms both radiant

and fleeting, a reminder of beauty held in time. Even the magnolia I recently planted has begun to flourish, a small but hopeful sign of life taking root. Yet the deeper truth to which all this points is found in the words of Jesus: “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies... it bears much fruit.” The pattern of death and new life lies at the heart of the Gospel.

Easter invites each of us to entrust ourselves anew to this mystery. What in our lives, our churches, and our relationships must be surrendered so that God may bring renewal? The resurrection assures us that no act of faithful surrender is ever wasted. In the Christian East, the icon of the resurrection expresses this hope with profound beauty. Christ stands upon the broken gates of Hades, reaching down to raise Adam and Eve, and with them the whole human family. It is a vision not only of victory, but of joy: humanity lifted into the life of the triune God.

This is a hope we share across our churches. For those engaged in the work of Christian unity, the resurrection is our common foundation and calling. Our divisions, though real, do not define the final reality of the Church. The risen Christ continues to draw us to himself and to one another, and in him we find both the courage and the confidence to walk together.

Often, this work unfolds quietly – in prayer, in friendship, in hospitality, in shared witness. Yet these small and faithful acts are seeds of a greater harvest, signs of the deeper unity we already share in Christ.

Easter calls us to live from this hope: to trust in the victory of Christ, to stand alongside those who suffer, and to bear witness with renewed confidence to the Gospel. In a wounded world, we are called to be people of resurrection – people who live not in fear, but in hope; not in despair, but in the promise of new life.

As we celebrate this holy season, may the joy of Easter renew our faith, strengthen our fellowship, and deepen our commitment to one another in Christ. And may we walk together, with confidence and hope, toward that ultimate fulfilment, when all things are made new and all creation is gathered into the loving embrace of God.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia.

**The Most Reverend Dame Sarah Mullally**  
**Archbishop of Canterbury**

