

Easter: a triumph of life and a new beginning

By Archbishop Brad Billings

There are times in our lives when a new beginning is to be welcomed and cherished. It may be a significant life event, moving to a new home, or simply a resolution to start again and see the world differently. The daily rhythms of the earth, whereby the sun rises each morning bringing new light to banish the temporary darkness of night, remind us that each morning brings with it the dawn of a new day and opportunity for a new beginning.

The story of Easter is the story of new life and of new hope, and of light overcoming darkness. Although the events of the first Easter morning take place in the distant past, some two thousand or more years ago, their meaning and relevance continues to be felt and experienced today in a variety of ways, such as the very observance of public holidays at this time of year.

The first followers of Jesus, having witnessed his death on a cross and burial, had returned to their homes in despair, convinced that the journey they had travelled all the way to Jerusalem with Jesus of Nazareth had now come to an end. But the miracle of Easter is that death did not have the last say.

The rising of Jesus from the dead on the first Easter morning lies at the heart of the Christian faith handed down to us by the Bible and the body of tradition received and passed on by the early Church. It holds out the possibility of new life and of a new beginning, both for the world in which we live, and for each and every one of us, in every time and place. Like the rising of the sun each morning, the rising of Jesus Christ from the dead shines light on what is often a dark world, giving hope for a better future, in which war and violence, and hatreds and conflicts, will one day cease, and even death itself will be overcome.

This good news is not, however, just for the future, but is good news right now! The most amazing thing about the rising of Jesus from the dead on the first Easter morning is that its promise and power can be experienced right now, by faith, regardless of our present life circumstances, and whatever the joys and despairs life in this world might bring us. The promise of the Bible is, â??that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be savedâ?• (Romans 10.9).

May the Easter story about life triumphing over death, and light overcoming darkness, bring the possibility of a new beginning, new hope, and the promise of a better day for all in our community. And may the light of Easter banish the darkness of violence and hatred away from the hearts of those would make for war, but instead let the peacemakers prevail and be blessed. As Jesus taught his disciples, so we pray, â??you kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.â?•

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