

EASTER MESSAGE

FROM THE BISHOP OF BURNLEY, RT REV. PHILIP NORTH

The video version of this message [is available here](#) on the Diocesan YouTube channel.

Easter is full to the brim of stories of lives completely remade ...

- The women arrive at the tomb utterly distraught with grief. But they run from the tomb with a greater joy than they have ever known to share the news.
- The disciples on the road to Emmaus are grumbling and complaining. But then, when bread is broken, they gasp with delight.
- Thomas in the upper room doubts everything. He cannot believe his friends or the promises that have been made to him. But then he sees the risen Lord and worships him.

All those people came to the same realisation – that Jesus was alive again. They'd seen him die and be buried. But he was alive again.

And this a story that is still being told. Still today lives are being changed. Because Jesus is alive again. That's the heart of Easter. Heart of the Christian faith. Jesus died and is alive again.

And if he is alive again, then we can know him. Just like the women at the tomb, the disciples on the road and Thomas, we can know him and know the joy he brings us. If he is alive again, we can live our lives in relationship with him.

This Easter I don't have some profound theological statement to make. All I want to do is invite you into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Which is available to you because Jesus is alive.

I want to do that because I know with all my heart that there is no human life that is not transformed for the good by this relationship.

Whether you think life's great or whether you are going through hell, Jesus can offer you something that nothing else and no one else in all this universe can.

- **First, Jesus can offer you Friendship.** When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene by the tomb, she realised that she could still know Jesus as a friend. That can be you. You can know Jesus as a friend, a friend who will never let you down or let you go; a friend whose love for you is utterly secure. And better still you can be part of a community of friends which is the church, a community that gathers to be with Jesus in worship and feeds on his risen life in the Eucharist.
- **Next, Jesus can offer you Freedom.** On the cross Jesus died the death that we deserve because of our sin. So, as he rises, we can see that death and sin are destroyed for ever. We are free, free from everything that is at enmity with human life, free to live in him for ever. You can be free for ever in the risen Lord.



- **And third, Jesus can offer you a Future.** Part of the relationship that Jesus offers is that he has a plan for our lives. That plan that gives us a purpose now as we seek to build a world that is more like God's world. And that plan that embraces all eternity because Jesus never lets go of those who turn to him, but loves them for ever.

Jesus is alive. That's the message of Easter. So why not get to know him? As you do so, what you will find is nothing less than life itself. Life in all its fullness.

Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!