

MESSAGE FOR EASTER 2014 ARCHBISHOP GEORGE STACK

Memories are amongst our most precious possessions. Our memories define our past. They color our present. They define our future. Without memories, history, custom and tradition, we lose the context within which to make decisions.

Over these days of Easter, Christians *re*-member the events of the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus. This is not just a fading memory of events two thousand years ago. For the last two thousand years his followers have put back together again the implications of what he achieved on Calvary. They have kept the memory of the conflict between good and evil, life and death, love and hatred alive by their faith that in his rising from the dead Jesus has revealed the faithfulness of God at the darkest moment of human history. Where is God in the midst of human suffering? 'Here', says Jesus, with arms outstretched on the cross.

That is why Christians dare to call Good Friday "Good". It is a day of contrasts, paradox and contradiction. Death seems to have the last word. Evil seems triumphant. Love is extinguished with the final blow of the nails on the cross. But God doesn't give up on us, even if we give up on him. "*Life with death contended. Combat strangely ended*", says an ancient hymn. Wherever there is suffering, pain and death the healing power of God is present, not least through the hope the Resurrection of Jesus gives. The signs of new life which surround us in spring draw us to a deeper understanding of the new life Jesus offers us.

"Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness". The Easter candle representing the light of Christ shines into the darkest corners of our lives. I pray that the light of his love will shine on you and inspire you to be light for others this Easter.

+George Stack
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