

Easter Messages from our Bishops 2021

From the Bishop of Worcester, John Inge

During the last year we've been confronted with death in a spectacular and shocking way. Thousands and thousands of people have died prematurely in the pandemic.

Death, the death of Jesus, is at the heart of the Christian Festival of Easter; but death does not have the last word. When God raised Jesus from the dead it was made clear for all to see that his love is stronger than death and stretches out into all eternity.

Easter can give hope in the face of the terrible death toll of this last year – and in the face of our own mortality – in a way that nothing else can. Yet many people find resurrection difficult to believe. As a former scientist, I don't. As my late wife, Denise, wrote shortly before she died:

The whole of human history is littered with things that were once deemed impossible. We know so much about matter and energy, but there is also much that we do not yet know and our knowledge is always changing. Five hundred years ago no one imagined light bulbs, or space travel, or genetic engineering. A decade or two ago saying we are made of star dust would have sounded like the stuff of a fairy tale, and now it sounds like particle physics. So I do not find it hard to imagine the possibility of a bodily resurrection.

No, neither do I, and it gives me hope for the future. Resurrection is not just about the future, though: it's about the here and now. It can bring meaning and purpose and hope. May it do that for you this Easter, as it has for millions over hundreds of years.

Happy Easter!

Bishop John.

From the Bishop of Dudley, Martin Gorick

This time last year... we were just into lockdown number one.

Now, 12 months later... 125,000+ deaths, every person, every family affected. The pain and loss has already been immense. The grief and cost of Covid will be with us for years to come.

But there is always hope. Hope seen in acts of kindness. NHS staff giving their all and sometimes their lives. Tens of thousands of volunteers helping neighbours, the housebound and now delivering vaccines by the million. They have filled me with hope.

The story of Easter begins with darkness, division and death, as Jesus is nailed to a cross of wood to die as a criminal. He was crucified, dead and buried.

But that wasn't the end. On Easter Day Christians around the world celebrate Jesus risen from the dead. Christians have discovered that life with Jesus begins now, and lasts forever. That's why there is always hope.

The crucified Jesus comforts us in our fear and grief. The risen Jesus inspires us to come together as one, and to share his love and new life with others. In Dudley we are beginning the As One campaign, hoping to fill our streets with friendliness. To work together for a better future for everyone. To come together As One.

Happy Easter!

Bishop Martin