

*Christ is Risen! Alleluia!* With these words of great joy we proclaim that which lies at the heart of our faith – that the pain and anguish we felt on Good Friday has been replaced with the great happiness of the living Christ – the Christ who continues to live, thereby giving us life.

The events of Easter may well bring us much joy. But we must be aware of the need for these events to actually change us, as we continue to live our lives, or it is a more hollow joy that we experience this day. Part of the ways in which we are called to this transformation is to have eyes that are open to seeing the moments of resurrection within and around us. Too often, I think, we are attuned to those moments of death – those things which bring us grief and pain – but not “wired” to see the moments of resurrection.

The Archbishop of Wales, the Most Rev. Dr. Barry Morgan, once said that “‘resurrection moments’ are when we glimpse God when we least expect to and that they can change our lives. The reasons people come to faith or have faith are not based in the end on reason, although it may have a part to play. In the end, it has to do with the feeling that we have been called and addressed by God at some moment in our lives and have responded positively – and that calling happens in all kinds of ways – through listening to music, watching a beautiful sunset or being touched by the kindness of strangers or friends.”

Our faith calls us to transformation – in the same way that the darkness of Good Friday is transformed into the blinding light of the Easter Dawn, so the darkness of our lives can give way to Christ’s light, as it shines into our lives, and through us as we live in the world. It is difficult, at times, to see the hope amidst the gloom. But that does not mean that it is not present, each and every day. To see how God did not abandon Jesus Christ in darkness of his Passion is as sure a reminder as we need that God does not abandon us, the baptised members of Christ’s body, in our times of darkness and despair.

This is the very symbol of which the Paschal Candle speaks to us. In the action of bringing this light into the darkened church early this morning, we proclaimed that the darkness shall not keep hold over us, and that the light which shines in the darkness has not been overcome. Even a single flame is enough to provide light by which we might walk, and by which we may serve our God of life, and light, and love.

This candle is the same symbol, of course, which takes its place at the centre of our liturgies of Baptism (and the reason why Easter Day is used as an opportunity to renew our Baptismal Vows), because it is through this act of Baptism that we claim the promise of the resurrection in our lives, and live as God’s ‘new creation’.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Let our glad “Alleluias” ring out...

May the Risen Christ and all the Saints walk with you this joyful Eastertide...

*Sam*