

Friday 11 April 2025  
*from the National Council of Churches in Australia*

## Easter 2025 Messages from Australia's National Church Leaders

### 'He is Risen'

The Easter cry 'He is Risen' is one that is shared by all Christians. It is a chorus of hope and triumph and the most distinctive claim that we make as Christian communities and so defines us. We celebrate that the last word in the Easter story is not one of violence, injustice and death. It is one of life and joy.

We affirm together that God's love is stronger than death, that God does not forsake or abandon us, and that Jesus the Risen Lord is with us. This Easter affirmation gives us hope in suffering and disaster, solidarity in turmoil and uncertainty and care in situations of distress and conflict.

Many are experiencing the personal impact of disaster, war, uncertainty and upheaval. The reasons for the upheaval vary from situation to situation and are outside of the direct control of the individuals who suffer. Hope does not take away the source of the struggle or pain, however it does point to the good news of Jesus who is with us and is close.

It is our common prayer that, no matter the circumstances we may be in, or the struggle we may face that we find the encouraging and loving presence of the risen Jesus.

Christ is our hope.

*Rev John Gilmore, President  
National Council of Churches in Australia*

**(Note:** This year, the Western, Orthodox and Oriental Churches will all celebrate Easter on Sunday 20 April 2025.)

The 15 messages follow.

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For more information, contact the **NCCA Secretariat on 02 9299 2215** or [secretariat@ncca.org.au](mailto:secretariat@ncca.org.au)

## Anglican Church of Australia



I think it's fair to say that over the past couple of months, the world has felt even more chaotic than usual. The global economy is being quickly destabilised, and stock markets are reacting dramatically to the instability. We were already anxious, but now we are even more so.

Add an election in early May with politicians now flinging themselves from one corner of the country to another, haphazardly promising the world, to ongoing intractable and complex conflicts in many places, and the world feels like it's just holding on.

Thankfully, Easter has nearly arrived.

Easter, that is, Good Friday and Easter Day, bring us not only important messages, but also important facts that impact our daily lives and offer an alternative vision of life to that which is mostly evident in our community.

On Good Friday, we see both love and reconciliation. Jesus's offering of his life on the cross demonstrates a rare love and self-giving. This is what God is like—a God who gives rather than takes. Jesus's death on the cross also accomplishes something. It brings reconciliation between God and humanity, the foundation for all other reconciliation. Greatness isn't found in self-absorption, self-interest or power. Greatness is found in giving.

On Easter Day, we celebrate again Jesus' resurrection. His resurrection is not some supernatural magic trick, great for a display but that's about all. The resurrection is the defeat of death and the opening of a new reality for the world. The future now is not death and destruction but life and new creation. Jesus' resurrection has changed the trajectory of the history of the world. This reality offers hope. Not hope in the future but hope today from the future.

Our world desperately needs hope. But we also need a reason to have different attitudes and to live in a loving, generous, forgiving, gracious, and peace-filled way today.

The reason is what happened at Easter: the self-offering of Jesus, through which peace with God is possible, and the resurrection of Jesus, to prove that reconciliation is real and to begin the invasion of darkness by light and life.

The celebration of Easter comes every year. This year it is particularly important. We have the opportunity to make the most of it. May we do just that.

*The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith, Archbishop of Adelaide  
Primate, Anglican Church of Australia*

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# Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese

## Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!



As we celebrate the Feast of Feasts, the Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, we rejoice, and our hearts are filled with joy. The Resurrection of Christ signifies victory over death, over sin, and over hostility. It marks the end of the old ways and the beginning of a new life.

This year, our celebration of Pascha comes in challenging times, as the entire world grapples with suffering and division. Our generous Lord welcomes everyone, the first and the last, as St. John Chrysostom reminds us, and invites each of us to join in.

Answering this Paschal call, let us embrace one another with love. Our Pascha is a spiritual liberation, a shift from being trapped by the material world to embracing the eternal values of the Kingdom of the Risen Christ, where we learn to collaborate with God, the Source of true and life-giving Love.

Our Pascha means partaking in the saving Sacrifice of Christ. In His humility, the Son of God ascended the Cross, giving Himself as a sacrifice, so that we might eagerly follow Him on our own journey of sacrifice and accept His gift of eternal Life, the gift of the Resurrection.

We hope that the light of the Resurrection will dispel any lingering shadows in our hearts and fill them with the life-giving rays of God's Love and Mercy.

*His Eminence Metropolitan Basilios, Archbishop*

*Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines*

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## Catholic Church in Australia



As we celebrate the Easter triumph of love over hatred and of life over death this year, we do so conscious that in so many places around the world the reality is very different. Violence, vengeance and the trampling of people's most basic rights bring untold suffering and arouse deep fears about the future for all of us.

The Risen Lord's Easter promise of peace can seem more like an impossible dream than a source of confident trust. Can love really triumph over hatred? Can life really triumph over death?

The peace the Lord promises is a gift and also a task. The gift is freely offered, but only those with open hearts are able to receive it. Only those with courage, grounded in faith in the Lord and in the power of his Spirit, are able to pursue it. What we are not able to do alone, we can do if we remain in communion with the Lord. God once promised through the prophet Ezekiel, **"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you"** (Ezekiel 36:26). May this be our Easter prayer this year: may we thus become the peacemakers Jesus calls blessed.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

*Archbishop Tim Costelloe SDB, Archbishop of Perth,  
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference*

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Calculating the date of Easter is a complicated business, which I won't detail here. However, it got more complicated when the Gregorian calendar began to be adopted in Western Europe in the sixteenth century and we diverged from the practice of the Eastern churches. The result is that most years, East and West celebrate Easter on different days.



This year, though, is one of those occasions when we all line up on the same date. It is nice timing, because this year we mark the 1700th anniversary of the opening of the Council of Nicaea, which set a common observance throughout the Church, still then breathing with both lungs.

More importantly than setting the date of Easter, Nicaea tackled the difficult task of finding language to express the core of Christian faith: that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly human.

The events we ponder at Easter: that Jesus Christ was crucified, died and was buried; and rose again on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; derive their power from our belief that he took flesh of our sister the Virgin Mary and remained God. Otherwise, those events might be poignantly beautiful, but ineffective in the forgiveness of sin and the defeat of death.

In this world torn and battered by injustices and wars, let's renew our faith in the offer of reconciliation and new life that we celebrate at Easter. And may we discover how to communicate that hope to all, fulfilling the Church's mission to be a sign of unity and an instrument of peace.

*Bishop Michael McKenna, Bishop of Bathurst,  
Chair, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's Commission for Christian Unity and  
Inter-Religious Relations.*

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# Chinese Methodist Church in Australia



## The Significance of Easter

Easter carries profound meaning, encompassing at least three key aspects.

### 1. Encountering Christ

The first significance of Easter is that it invites people to experience a personal encounter with the risen Christ. On the morning of His resurrection, Mary Magdalene, upon discovering the empty tomb, met Jesus and ran to tell His disciples, declaring, ***“I have seen the Lord!”*** (John 20:18). Just as Mary encountered Him, Easter reminds us that countless people throughout history—and even today—have the opportunity to meet Jesus, the risen Savior of the world.

### 2. A Call to Renewal

Easter also calls us to leave behind the old and embrace the new. The apostle Paul exhorts, ***“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, ... Christ, who is your life”*** (Colossians 3:1-4). Just as Christ triumphed over death, so too can we, through Him, rise above sin and darkness. The power of His resurrection offers a transformed life—one that radiates the light of eternity in a world longing for hope.

### 3. Empowered to Move Forward

Finally, Easter strengthens and empowers us to walk boldly in faith. When Jesus was arrested, tried, and crucified, His disciples were overcome with fear and hid. Yet, in the 40 days following His resurrection, He appeared to them, restoring their faith and filling them with courage. Because of Easter, we too can walk forward, emboldened by His resurrection power, even in the face of trials. No wonder Paul declared, ***“It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”*** (Galatians 2:20).

Two thousand years after Christ’s resurrection, Easter continues to be a time when the global Church calls people to encounter Jesus, embrace new life, and live as His disciples. Through His resurrection, we are empowered to embody the kingdom of heaven on earth.

*Bishop Milton Nee*

*Chinese Methodist Church in Australia*

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## Churches of Christ in Australia



For Christians, the Resurrection of Jesus makes a daily difference. Identifying with Christ's victory over death sees us partner with him in gaining access to relationship with God as well to eternal life.

Separation from God is removed in Christ, guilt and shame are overcome in Christ, and access to the power of God for daily living is won in Christ!

Of course, all of us are guilty of self-focus and wrongdoing that breaks relationship with our Creator, even if to a small degree. This logically prevents us accessing eternal life with God whose perfect judgment must perfectly judge us as being unworthy of Heaven. Perfect judgment is balanced, though, by perfect love. That love saw Christ pay the price for sin, dying as a human substitute, but it was not for himself, due to his divine freedom from sin. Only Jesus was perfect so as to mediate between us and God.

The joy of Easter cannot be in celebrating new life without also understanding the basis of that life. We remember, on one special day in the calendar, an extraordinary event which makes a transforming difference in us daily.

And this is not just in how we feel or think about ourselves. Our new life is secured by God who anoints us with his power and gives us supernatural gifts. Of course, divine bestowal of talents is enjoyed by all of us, but the capacity to be agents of physical and emotional healing, supernatural insight, and miraculous power enables us to also spread the Good News of Christ's Easter victory to those around us.

Rather than select a Christian faith from the 'supermarket' of philosophical ideas, we celebrate instead the only belief that is truly transformative.

Jesus is not just Lord of the world, then, but of each individual who opens up to the gift of love, grace, and new life that He still seeks to bring us today. The choice to accept or reject that gift is ours.

Happy Easter!

*Dr. Rob Nyhuis – National Chair,  
Churches of Christ Council in Australia*

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# Coptic Orthodox Church – Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions

## The Glorious Feast of the Resurrection

### Christ is Risen, Truly He is Risen!!

The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ gives us hope for a better life and a bright future.

We are reminded by the words of St. Peter the Apostle, as inspired by the Holy Spirit, ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”*** (1 Peter 1:3).

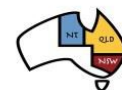
Whereas despair leads to death, hope grants life.

- The Resurrection of Christ granted hope to the disciples and replaced their fear and despair. Initially, the events of the Crucifixion filled their hearts with fear, as St. John wrote, ***“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews”*** (John 20:19). This fear however did not last for long, because “Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ***‘Peace be with you.’*** When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. ***Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord”*** (John 20:19, 20). Thus, the Resurrection of Christ gave them hope, which in turn changed their fear to joy, because joy is linked to hope, as St. Paul wrote, ***“rejoicing in hope”*** (Romans 12:12).
- The Resurrection of Christ changed the state of despair, which the two disciples of Emmaus experienced. St. Luke wrote, ***“While they conversed and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, ‘What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?’”*** (Luke 24:15-17). They summarized their depressed state in these words, ***“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel”*** (Luke 24:21). However, at the breaking of the bread, the Lord became known to them, and their minds were opened to understand Christ’s Holy Resurrection.
- The Resurrection of Christ changed Mary Magdalene’s sorrow and weeping. At first, she thought that Christ’s Body was stolen, but when the Lord called her and said, ***“Mary!”*** (John 20:16), she recognized Him and understood that He is the Risen Lord. Consequently, ***“Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her”*** (John 20:18).
- The Resurrection of Christ gives us hope, because ***“the things which are impossible with men are possible with God”*** (Luke 18:27). ***“For with God nothing will be impossible”*** (Luke 1:37).
- The Resurrection of Christ grants us the hope and the power to serve others by offering help and caring for the needy.

We pray that the light of Christ’s Resurrection may shine in our hearts lives homes churches and our Australian society bringing hope.



COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH  
+ DIOCESE OF SYDNEY +  
& AFFILIATED REGIONS  
N S W • Q U E B • N T



Hope is (helping other people excel). May the Risen Christ empower you to be an Ambassador of Hope.

With the Grace of God

*His Grace, Bishop Daniel*

*Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church - Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions*

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## **Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia & New Zealand**



On this joyful occasion, the Glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I greet you with the most warm Christian love from the spiritual centre of Armenia, the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, where I currently find myself. The place where our Armenian people, from the beginning of the 4th century, believed and accepted the certainty of the resurrection and recognised Christ our Saviour, as the remedy for difficulties and trials, and the source of truth, justice and the path to live through Him and with Him.

This year, we observe an interesting coincidence, our churches celebrate the Holy Resurrection on the same date, which is a unique opportunity to reflect on our shared roots and re-establish, our love, brotherhood, collaboration and unity in Christ. It appears to be a heavenly invitation for us to join in united prayer for world peace, for harmony, to recognise God's Light, and to appreciate the gifts God has granted us, to care for them, and to approach all matters innovatively.

The Gospels tell us that as the angel stood by our Lord's tomb, he said to the women who arrived at the tomb, "He is not here, but has risen". Their eyes were opened, and they became the first witnesses of the Risen Christ. Today, we Christians are the bearers of the same good news, each time we witness, we confirm He is Lord of us all, He is truly Risen and has granted us life through His Resurrection.

On behalf of the clergy of the Armenian Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, the Diocesan Council, and church bodies, and our community faithful, we greet the leaders of our Christian sister churches, spiritual and secular ministers, administrators and the faithful, wishing all steadfast faith and continuing successes.

Yet once again, reaffirming the Light's soul-renewing and life-giving good news, by declaring the words, "Christ is risen from the dead, Blessed is the Resurrection of Christ".

Yours prayerfully in Christ's Love

*Bishop Vardan Navasardyan, Primate,*

*Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand*

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## Greek Orthodox Church of Australia



“Χριστός Ανέστη. Ἀληθῶς Ανέστη! Christ is Risen; Truly He is Risen”

Protocol No.: 1057

"Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. Your Cross, O Christ, we venerate, and Your holy Resurrection we praise and glorify. For You are our God; apart from You we know no other; we call upon Your name. Come, all faithful, let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ; for behold, through the Cross, joy has come to the whole world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His Resurrection; for having endured the Cross for us, He destroyed death by death."

With this joyful Paschal hymn, we exclaim the mystery of salvation effected by the saving passion and very life-bearing resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. For out of His absolute love for humanity, Christ the Son and Word of God, took on the fullness of human nature, to restore, refashion and recreate us according to **"the measure of the stature"** of His fullness (Eph. 4:13), as true and perfect God become true and perfect man, so that we **"may become partakers of divine nature"** (2 Peter 1:4), which is to live the fullness of the life and love of God.

We live in a world where unbelief and doubt in the reality of God predominate, and where the resurrection of Christ to be intelligible is reduced to metaphor. Yet, Christ says to us **"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even if they die; and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"** (John 11:25-26). In order for us to exclaim **"Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world"** (John 11:27), we must open our hearts and minds so that we may be embraced by the mystery of salvation which has been accomplished **"once for all"** (Heb. 10:10). The reality of salvation is not a mere hope for us but rather embraces our whole existence. This gift of true life, which is given to us by Christ in all its fullness, becomes the divine and life-giving gateway for us to live here and now a life of genuine faith and love, and of true repentance and humility, for these lead to holiness and sanctification which are in Christ and are everlasting.

The resurrection of Christ grants to us mystical participation in the very reality of His life and bestows upon us and all the world the fullness of His heavenly and eternal blessings.

Wishing all a blessed and joyous Easter, I remain,

*Archbishop MAKARIOS, Primate,*

*Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Released 7 April 2025*

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## Lutheran Church of Australia



What words can we use, to speak about Easter morning?

Joy – Celebration – New Life!

JRR Tolkien, a Scholar of the English language and author of the popular saga: *Lord of the Rings*, teaches us a wonderful word to describe Easter: “Eucatastrophe!” Here is an expression that celebrates the deep meaning of this Easter Gospel.

“Eucatastrophe.” What is that? We do know the word “catastrophe.” We think in terms of a Tsunami, or of invading armies, or of world financial crisis. We use the word catastrophic to describe a turn of events that spells disaster. The word “catastrophe” originally means a major turn or a great unravelling of things.

Easter Dawn changes our understanding of Good Friday. Good Friday is “good” because it is no longer is a catastrophe in that disastrous sense, though it first seems so. A great turn has occurred. That is why Tolkien adds two small but hope-filling letters “eu” onto the word “catastrophe” to make: Eucatastrophe. “Eu” are letters we add to say, “Good”. Euphoria is a good feeling. Eulogy is a good word. Eucatastrophe is a good catastrophe.

Tolkien says that the Resurrection of Jesus is the eucatastrophe in the story of Jesus of Nazareth. He had died a horrible death. Bloodied and beaten, his life-less body was laid in a borrowed grave. Eu -catastrophe – a good catastrophe. A good turn. THE Good Turn.

What has turned? The whole of history? Yes. Death is changed forever. One has returned from the grave, to live forever. The Bible speaks of dying with Christ, to rise with him to be forever with the Lord. He said, “Those who live and believe in me, will never die.”

In drama, we speak of the catastrophe as that point in the play, when it finally all fits together. The moment when you realize that “she did that – because he went there – and they met them. I get it!!” The Easter Gospel is the “eucatastrophe”, when it all makes GOOD sense. Christ is risen and with us and working change in this world, even in me.

In an essay “*On Fairy-Stories*”, Tolkien, the great storyteller, wrote, “The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of [Man's] history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. This story begins and ends in joy.”

On behalf of the people of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand I pray that you and your loved ones experience the hopeful joy of the Easter Gospel.

*Bishop Paul Smith,  
Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand*

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## Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

### Sorrow and Joy.

One of the verses of that Easter hymn “When I survey the Wondrous Cross” brings together the two themes of Easter – sorrow and joy:



*See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down,  
Did e'er such joy and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown.*

The world routinely presents as a troubled place. Never-ending wars, tragic tales of loss of life and thousands of refugees. Problems seem harder to solve, inequalities increase, and societies are becoming more polarised and conflicted. There is so much sorrow... Joy cannot be conjured at will; it is not guaranteed.

It is very hard to find anything joyful if you are suffering grief, loss, pain or sadness. However, joy can emerge as a result of our faith; it is one of the “fruits of the spirit”. For Quakers, this can mean silent worship or prayer, either individually or in a group. We seek to come closer to the Spirit and to be open to Divine Guidance. As a result of worship, many of us feel deep connection to each other, to society, to the universe. While faith does not remove suffering, it can transform how we experience it. Many have felt transformed or liberated, reassured or strengthened, and yes, joyful and loving! I’m sure these are experiences shared by many people of faith. For me those feelings don’t stay with me, so I find myself returning to silent prayer over and over again.

But we are called to act in the world to do what we can to act justly, to walk humbly and to love mercy. (Micah 6:8). It’s not an option to throw up one’s hands and do nothing, but you can’t take on the whole world either. Caroline Fox (1841) wrote “Live up to the Light that thou hast, and more will be granted thee”.

*Bruce Henry, Presiding Clerk  
Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Quakers)*

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## The Salvation Army, Australia Territory



### HOPE FOUND, HOPE LOST, HOPE REVEALED.

I wonder if you ever imagine being one of the disciples. The calling, the teaching, the following closely in the footsteps of Rabbi Jesus. The miracles, the admonitions, doing things because He asked and watching Him come through, the reactions of people. Delight, hope. He's the One. HOPE FOUND.

And then He starts talking about going away. "But we've only begun the journey. Where's He going? What's going on?" The Last Supper, the betrayal and arrest, the trials, the fear, the denials, the crucifixion, and death, death in a cruel and humiliating way, on a cross. HOPE LOST

And, then on the third day, the women go to the tomb. The tomb is empty. The angels inform them that He is not there, He is risen from the dead. He appears to the disciples. He's alive, and even though He's going the Father, His promises are real. He'll send the comforter, the Holy Spirit. He'll be with them always to the end of the age. HOPE FOUND.

In these days, in our world, so many find themselves in the space of HOPE LOST. Questions arise, "What is happening in our world right now? What will happen with Russia and Ukraine? What will happen with Israel and the Palestinians? Can I put food on the table? Is this world safe? Should I bring children into this world? Is there any hope? Is there a future?"

And for each of us, HOPE REVEALED, Jesus is still with us, in us, for us. We trust Him. We follow closely. We wrestle in prayer. We share our beautiful Jesus. We are the hope givers and hope bringers to our world, as people who are salt and light.

May God reveal hope to many during this most meaningful time of year. Same Jesus. Hope revealed.

Bless you friends.

*Commissioner Miriam Gluyas, Territorial Commander  
The Salvation Army Australia Territory*

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## Uniting Church in Australia



It began in the shadows. A story of death - but also life.

The women came at dawn on Easter Sunday. Hearts heavy. Hope buried. They had seen the cross, had stood in the silence of loss. Now, they stood before the tomb. Cold, silent, unsealed. The place where dreams end... or so they thought.

But when they arrived, the stone was rolled away. Empty. And then: words that shattered the silence forever:

***"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!"*** (Luke 24:6)

The tomb – once a symbol of defeat – became the birthplace of courage. They came grieving and afraid and were called from their sorrow. They rose up. They ran and they proclaimed. Fear gave way to faith. Despair gave way to purpose.

And now, the question comes to us: What tombs are we living in?

The tomb of fear? Of division? Of hopelessness?

The resurrection of Jesus is more than a promise. It is now. It is ours. It calls us to rise from death to life. From despair to hope. From the tomb to new beginnings, or new life!

Like the women who were the first to proclaim that Jesus had risen, we cannot stay silent. We cannot go back to life as it was while our communities long for renewal and our world aches for peace.

This is our moment. We cannot wait. We must rise now and speak words of healing into a world torn apart. Act with courage where the vulnerable are forgotten. Love without limits. Serve without fear. Hope without hesitation.

From the silence of the tomb rises the song of hope. Do not linger in the shadows of fear and despair. Step out from the tomb. Stop looking for the living among the dead, for Christ is risen.

Let's live boldly as people of new life, strong in courage and relentless in love.

May the joy of the risen Christ bring you peace and renew your spirits.

Wishing you and your communities a blessed Easter!

*Rev Charissa Suli, President  
Uniting Church in Australia Assembly*

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## Australian Baptist Ministries

### What Cross will you bear?



On Good Friday, you may enjoy some hot cross buns (well, actually you may have been eating them since Christmas) fresh from the oven. But what does the cross mean? Why do Christians talk about “taking up their cross and following Jesus”? Is it more than eating a tasty Easter bun?

Sadhu Sundar Singh says, “If we do not bear the cross of the Master, we will have to bear the cross of the world, with all its earthly goods. Which cross have you taken up?”

What does it mean to “take up a cross?” When Jesus carried His cross, it wasn’t a symbolic burden, it was the means of his death. So, taking up your cross to follow Jesus means giving your life, dying to yourself. Often, we would rather have our lives improved, not necessarily transformed. We like the idea of freedom but not the responsibility to die daily to ourselves. We want blessing without duty, grace without obligation, and life without death.

The Book of Matthew says that Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”

The cross has become a sentimental symbol, a trinket worn around your neck, or a bun heating nicely in the oven. But following Christ, or being a Christian is a commitment to the suffering Christ. Christ who was crucified on the cross.

Thomas à Kempis, writing in the 15th century observed, “There will always be many who will love Christ’s heavenly kingdom, but few who will bear his cross. Jesus has many who desire consolation, but few who care for adversity. He finds many to share his table, but few will join him in fasting. Many are eager to be happy with him; few wish to suffer anything for him.... Many are awed by his miracles; few accept the shame of his cross.”

So why would we choose to take up our cross and follow Christ? Sadhu Sundar Singh got it right, we will bear a cross of one sort or another. The cross of the Master or the cross of the world. The Apostle Paul abandoned himself completely to Christ and considered all of his achievements as rubbish. “I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage that I may gain Christ and be found in him.”

The choice is ours. The cross of Christ or the cross of the world. Which cross have you taken up?

*Rev Mark Wilson, National Ministries Director  
Australian Baptist Ministries*

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## CERTAINTY IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

The story is told of a little boy, who was rescued after a terrible incident at sea. He was found clinging to a rock. His rescuers asked him if he was scared, to which he replied, “Yes, I was. I shook all night. But thankfully the rock didn’t move.”

One word that defines the mood of many Australians in this era is uncertainty. This is evident across a number of society’s spheres, which has the potential to undermine people’s confidence in life, and their hope for the future.

As we reflect on the message of Easter, we are reminded of a question posed to the women who went to Jesus’ tomb early on the Sunday morning, **“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!”**(Luke 24:6)

In a moment, their doubts and fears would have evaporated. The uncertainty that hung over their future gave way to hope; all because of the resurrection of their Saviour.

That conversation continued. “Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: “The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”

There is a song we often sang in days gone by, carries these powerful words: *“Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.”*

In these uncertain times, we all need an unmovable rock to hold on to. There may be a lot of things happening in the world today, but there’s a certainty for those that put our faith in God. It says with confidence, even in uncertain times, “I may not know what the future holds but I do know who holds the future – Jesus, the One who rose from the dead.”

*Pastor Wayne Alcorn, National President  
Australian Christian Churches (ACC)*

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For further information contact: Liz Stone NCCA General Secretary, [secretariat@ncca.org.au](mailto:secretariat@ncca.org.au)