



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP OF NIAGARA

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

The Bishop's Easter Message

April 17, 2022

Dear friends,

There's a wonderful meditation called "It's Friday – but Sunday's Comin" by S.M. Lockridge, sometime pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in San Diego, California.

It's a meditation for the Triduum and it reminds us that as Christians we know that the Easter story is one great sweep of three days – not individual days that are disjointed or disconnected but one wholistic movement of love and sacrifice and ultimately joy.

It reminds us that it's not actually possible to speak of Good Friday without knowing and saying that Easter Sunday is right behind. We are Resurrection people but to have Resurrection, we must pass through death by way of the cross.

Well, we've been living a pretty Good Friday life these past couple of years – all sacrifice with very little alleluia! We have walked through the valley of the shadow of death with loved ones – friends, family – as they have confronted the shadow of actual death. The manner of these losses has been as hard to bear as the loss themselves. We have witnessed the loss of community and fellowship and family ties. We have confronted our own worries about the lives of our parish families. And we are now confronting the shadow of war and worries for the global community.

In the words of Pastor Lockridge:

It's Friday
The world's winning
People are sinning
And evil's grinning

The trials and tribulations of recent weeks and months can very easily leave us feeling this way.

But because we are Eastered people – those who live in the light of the Resurrection, we have also said throughout this time: "It's Friday but let me tell you something, Sunday's comin" because we know that the power of the Resurrection changes everything.

Sunday is now here. To believe in the Resurrection of Jesus takes a lot of faith and courage, I know. But I have to tell you: it's more than just saying yes to the claim made by Mary and, eventually, the disciples in the Easter story. It's at the same time saying "no" to the power of death and destruction that surrounds us. In place of the bad news we hear and the bad experiences we have, we make the claim that there is a sustaining power: our loving and great God, who brings life out of death and reconciliation out of the conflict of war; transformation out of pain – and healing out of a pandemic.

Easter marks the beginning of a new creation, a revolution of love. It begins with the Resurrection of Jesus, and it continues in the proclamation of the Gospel of love. It continues as people come to faith and their works of mercy and words of love make this revolution a reality in each of our parishes. The Church – our Church - at its best continues to be the community of the new creation in a world that is too often headed for destruction by violence, prejudice, abuse, and death.

Instead, we share the words of life – real life, true life, resurrected life and because of them we are compelled to love.

May you celebrate these daily miracles as we say Alleluia! Christ is Risen!
He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Happy Easter!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Niagara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Right Reverend Susan J. A. Bell
Bishop of Niagara