



## A Message from the Bishop of Niagara The Right Reverend Susan Bell

*“I believe in Christ, like I believe in the sun—not because I can see it, but by it I can see everything else.” — C.S. Lewis*

Dear friends,

### **Christ is Risen! The Lord is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

I have often wondered—as believers all must have, I guess—about the immediate effect of the Resurrection on Jesus’ disciples and followers. Of course, reading the scriptures some 2000 years distanced from the events they describe, we have the advantage over the early Church in that we know how it turns out. But I have wondered if they were so sure in the hours and days and months after the crucifixion if it looked like there was a plan, if there was any orderliness, if there was any certainty? The disciples on the road to Emmaus didn’t seem to see the organic order in the events of the days prior. It wasn’t until they walked and talked with a stranger who unfolded the scriptures for them that they understood the internal symmetry of all the events leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection.

Speaking from our own context today, we sure could use some symmetry, an orderly, certain plan for the Church and for our world. The existential angst caused by things thought once unthinkable—like pandemic and a barely containable war, both of which have contributed to the economic roller coaster and rising cost of everything—is putting us all on edge. So, what can the Resurrection say to all that? What does the living Christ say to all that?

Well, let me take a run at this—keeping in mind C.S. Lewis’ beautiful quote that headed this reflection: “I believe in Christ like I believe in the sun—not because I can see it, but by it, I can see everything else.”

This quote is about the hope inherent in the Good News of Jesus' resurrection to life. Here Lewis is pointing to the fact that Jesus, fully human and at the same time, fully divine, has been revealed to be the Christ—the Messiah. All the events of his life point to this—his healing and preaching and teaching.

What Lewis grasps so beautifully though, is that the Resurrection changes everything. It becomes the lens through which we see everything. This is why Christians rather awkwardly, at least for our secular society, insist on a bodily death and resurrection. For, as theologian Benjamin Myers says, “If Christ is not raised in bodily form, then he would remain foreign to embodied human experience, to all those awkward joys and sorrows of social life. It is bodily resurrection that secures Christ's relevance to our lives here and now.”

In Jesus' resurrection, heaven and earth are united and something new is created. In other words, the Resurrection secures a ‘do-over’ for humanity. The Church is that new creation. She is in herself a sign of resurrection life—a changed community whose mandate is to “Go, tell.” She works from transformation for transformation. She is God's plan A to work for the good of the whole world—in truth, there is no plan B!

To return to the earlier question of whether the Resurrection can give us certainty, and a plan, and some meaning and symmetry to our lives, I'd say a profound “yes!” Because of Jesus' resurrection, there is in fact certainty that God in Christ has transformed human structures, redeemed them from all that is not of God.

I can say with certainty in my heart that because of the Resurrection, all that does not seek the common good is offside. I can say with certainty in my heart that my faith, the faith of the Church then, is not a private affair—that my faith and the faith of the Church is the motivation to seek justice in this world wherever we find that which militates against the love of God. This is our touchstone, our foundation, and our creed.

For all of us I pray that the transforming love of Christ continues to reveal to us the certainty of God's plan of redemption for our lives, for our churches, and for this world that God loves so much. And may we see by it what our role in our own beloved communities is to be for coming alongside God's mission of love.

Happy Easter everyone. Christ is risen indeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Niagara".

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