Read Archbishop Justin Welby's Easter letter to partners and heads of churches around the world.

Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you. (Matthew 28.7)

It is a recurrent theme of the resurrection narratives in the Gospels that the disciples are struggling to fully comprehend the good news of the resurrection. They do not understand what has happened. They are cautious and fearful, they lack decisiveness and wait for something to happen. Jesus always seems further ahead, or seeing further than them. Just as the angel urges them to follow him to Galilee, so we constantly have to hold up our eyes and focus on the future, God's future, where Jesus is leading us.

In our own time, it can be is very easy to feel depleted by events, and to keep our eyes on the ground. This has been a year of great suffering, sadness, uncertainty and fear for so many people around the world. In this country many have continued to endure the hardships of the cost of living crisis. Around the world, millions are caught up in war. We continue to pray for the suffering people of Ukraine and for all those caught up in the violence of that terrible war – as we pray too for people caught up in conflict in many countries around the world, for those who mourn and those who have been displaced.

It is not putting things too strongly to say that, for Christians, there is always a sense of waiting, of looking towards something that has yet to materialise in this world. The kingdom is now, and not yet. Even if we can lift up our hearts in hope, the present circumstances of our lives constantly bump them back down again. We frequently live, as it were, in a half-light, the dawn of the day of resurrection when what had actually happened was not yet understood by the disciples.

More than ever I believe the bonds of ecumenical friendship have the Holy Spirit woven through, binding us and reminding us of our mutual love and worship of our Lord and Saviour. My recent Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan with my brothers Pope Francis and Moderator Iain Greenshields was a sign that the Holy Spirit moves powerfully when we live out Jesus' prayer for his disciples to be one. Meanwhile my visits to Ukraine, Constantinople, Romania and Moldova and Australia have reminded me of the vital requirement for us to love our neighbours – and work together for peace and justice for all God's people.

One of the tasks of Christians is surely to keep reminding people steadfastly of that horizon of hope, the risen Jesus. We ought all to walk together, whatever our traditions, towards that horizon, trusting in faith in the one who has gone before us. Our walking together, working in love and fellowship as did the early church in the days after Pentecost, is itself a sign of the power of God's re-creation of humanity and of the world in the aftermath of the first Easter.

As we experience the challenges of these times, may we continue to turn towards each other, remembering the unprecedented nature of this

time in history of the friendships and dialogue opportunities between us.

And so I bring you joyful greetings of Easter – a time of renewal, of a heartfelt trust in a resurrection that includes us all. As Christians, we have a central, certain source of hope - he who sprang from the tomb on the first day, bursting into life and sharing his love with the world.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

+Justin Cantuar:

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby

Archbishop of Canterbury

3 min read

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