

Read Archbishop Justin's Diary Column in the Spectator, in which he considers the realities of our world in the light of the Easter promise.

Holy Week began in the shadow of war, suffering, and loss. How do we celebrate the promise of everlasting life in such darkness?

Palm Sunday is a day of contrasts and surprises. Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is a paradox – a king arrives on a donkey; an itinerant rabbi receives a royal welcome. The crowd is eager to listen but not to act. People often ask, 'If God exists, why doesn't he do something about suffering?' On Palm Sunday, we see our answer: the God that is coming isn't the God people expected or wanted. He doesn't do things to us; he lives among us. He fulfils the paradox: in service to God, giving away our lives for others is how we can live life in all its fullness.

Good Friday is 'good' because on the cross we see the goodness of God. Jesus refuses to answer his accusers. Instead, he sees the pain of those who hurt him. Even in the depths of his own suffering, he reaches out to the thief beside him. He lays down his life for others. In the shining light that the darkness does not overcome we can say, like the Roman Centurion: 'Truly, this man was the Son of God.'

I sometimes forget that I am Primate, not Pedant, of All England; the latter is easier. But there are words and phrases I don't much like. 'Literally' and 'unprecedented' are two –almost nothing is truly unprecedented, and very rarely do people literally mean 'literally'. Another is 'crisis', which comes from the Greek 'krisis', a time of decision. In the New Testament, there are two concepts of time: *chronos*, daily time, and *kairos*, a moment where there is a choice. 'A Kairos moment' is another phrase I dislike because it is now used to describe anything from the coffee rota to who manages the tombola at the village fête. Yet now I am tempted to use most of the banned words.

At a five-day meeting with the 36 senior Anglican archbishops from around the world, we heard of war, economic struggle, refugees, Covid, food shortages, and environmental degradation. The 'krisis' is real; the kairos moment is to choose to trust in God.

Attending an iftar meal at the Old Kent Road Mosque, I was grateful for relationships with those of different faiths. I don't take these interfaith friendships for granted. In my travels around the world, I have seen the destruction that occurs when religion becomes a justification for conflict. This year Lent and Ramadan overlap, a time for Christians and Muslims to remember that the things of God, reflected in our love for others in action, matter above all else.

I appeared on *Question Time* in Canterbury, the diocese I serve. There were impassioned discussions and sharp disagreements about Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis, the government's energy strategy and the impact of lorry tailbacks on the people of Kent. But I came away with a strong sense that so many of us share a deep desire for justice, fairness and the common good.

Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, arrived in nearby Thanet in 597 ad. Being in this diocese, I'm struck by the history of this church in this country. From the violent death of Thomas Becket to the welcome of 17th century French Huguenot refugees, our calling has remained the same: to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, serve those on the margins and love our neighbour. As I celebrate this Easter Sunday, I will do so with the suffering of people at home and abroad on my mind and the hope of the risen Christ in my heart.

3 min read

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