

Church of England bishops have highlighted the hope of the resurrection in a series of video and published messages ahead of Easter.

The **Bishop of Rochester, Jonathan Gibbs**, argues in his message that society could be at a “tipping point” where, amid multiple crises, people could again realise the need for faith.

Summing up the Easter story as one of apparent triumph followed by failure, opening the way for the resurrection, he explains: “As things stand in this country, it can feel as though faith is on the retreat, that the message of the crucified and risen Jesus is somehow irrelevant to the world of today, with its complex challenges, and its slick, hi-tech answers to its problems.

“But when we stop to think, we begin to realise that we human beings have not got things quite as sussed as we thought, with climate change and war and the refugee crisis and so many more issues besides.

“Perhaps after all we are not as clever and as capable as we like to think. ... I think we are perhaps approaching a tipping point beyond which we will no longer be able to hide from the truth of what we have done to ourselves and the world in which we live.”

He adds: “Quite plainly, we human beings do not have the capacity to sort things out for ourselves. We need someone to come alongside us and save us from ourselves, someone who can offer us a new beginning and a better way.”

A number of bishops speak about seeing or hearing Jesus in others.

The **Bishop of Chelmsford, Guli Francis-Dehqani** reflects on the story of the road to Emmaus, where the risen Jesus is revealed to two disciples who do not at first recognise him.

She draws parallels to modern Christians meeting with Christ “when we dwell in the Scriptures, meet with one another and break bread together.”

“Do we see him in the face of the person with whom we profoundly disagree, or the face of someone completely different to us?” she asks.

“The Christian journey is not one that we can undertake alone, but only with God and with one another.

“Through God’s grace, we are part of one body and each part of that body needs the other. It is together that we are sent out to love and serve the world, together that we build the kingdom of God, in the name of our risen Lord.”

The **Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally**, challenges people to listen for Jesus’s voice sometimes in unexpected places.

“This Eastertide may we hear Jesus’s voice in the clamour,” she says.

“May we listen for him in those who are unable to pay their bills; those who are relying heavily on food banks; those who find all talk of death and

resurrection deeply painful as they struggle with bereavement and loss.

“And those who live in places of conflict and torture who feel that their hope and longing for a welcome elsewhere is diminishing.”

The Bishop of Dudley, Martin Gorick, reflects on the cost of living crisis and the climate emergency as well as the war in Ukraine.

“It’s OK to admit to doubt, OK to say we are fearful and anxious, but these should never have the last word,” he says.

“Afraid we may be, but filled with Joy!”

The **Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin**, finds parallels between the sorrow of Mary weeping by the tomb of Jesus to the horrors of the war in Ukraine, including mass graves, and those affected by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

“Lives snuffed out by Russia’s cruel and unprovoked war; the entombed dead from fallen buildings in Ukraine caused by indiscriminate airstrikes and the entombed dead in Turkey and Syria following the devastating earthquakes.”

For those who are not in the midst of war, she asks, what are the ‘tombs’ that they keep going back to, when they could instead look to the risen Christ: “Why are we so distressed? What are we looking for? Why are we looking for the living God in the place of the dead? He is risen, He is risen indeed. Alleluia!”

The **Bishop of Truro, Philip Mounstephen**, says in a [video Easter message](#) that the message of the resurrection showed the world that the "doors of heaven" had been "thrown open" and we are invited to into a "whole new way of being".

“The reason we celebrate Easter is that it’s not just a change for Jesus. It’s a change, potentially, for the whole world,” he said.

“Up to that point death had had its own way. But at the point of resurrection all that stopped. Death was defeated.

“The doors of heaven have been thrown open and we’re invited to step through them into a whole new way of being.”

The **Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow**, and the **Bishop of Loughborough, Saju Muthalaly**, speak in a [joint video message](#) of how the story of the resurrection shows that there is hope in seemingly impossible situations, citing the climate crisis, war and increasing poverty at home and around the world.

Bishop Martyn speaks about needing God's strength and the wisdom and the prayers and counsel of others in difficult situations.

“We found comfort in the resurrection story and how Jesus finds two disciples walking to Emmaus disciples who think the game is up, disciples who feel close to giving up and walks alongside them,” he says.

“In their despair he reveals himself in a new way in the breaking of bread and companionship on the road. This story invites us to look at the impossible situations from another perspective in the lights of the Resurrection.”

The **Bishop of Worcester, John Inge**, says that the hope of Jesus's resurrection can give people hope to confront the terrors of the situation in the Holy Land today, and others across the world, including Ukraine.

“As Christians we know that, through the resurrection, which we celebrate again this Easter, Christ is risen from the dead and that in doing so has conquered all that is evil, all that is painful and death itself,” he says.

The **Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek**, encourages congregations to find time for quiet and stillness amid the noise and activity of Easter.

She says: “At the foot of the cross on Good Friday, may we pause to allow the noise of brokenness within us to be met by the mercy and grace of God; and on Saturday, when the world will be bustling, may we linger with the pain of loss and disappointment and recall Christ buried in the tomb, and his followers’ shattered dreams and hopes clamouring within them.

“Then, on Easter Day, may there be quiet space between the shouts of alleluias to hear Jesus speaking our name as we open ourselves again to encounter in new and deeper ways the hope and life of the living Christ.”

The **Bishop of Exeter Robert Atwell** says in a video message that God is with us in the "muddle and murkiness" of life, including the dark times, sharing our pain with us.

“God doesn’t need the information to pay attention to the suffering in the world because God is already present in and with those who are suffering – in Ukraine, with those who are still homeless following the earthquake in Syria and Turkey, with the single mother, skimping on her own food this Easter to make sure her children have enough to eat,” he said.

“And here’s the grace. Once we have met Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, and embraced the mystery of his cross, then when sickness, betrayal,

disappointment, failure and bereavement happen, we realise that God is not far from each of us.”

The **Bishop of Lichfield, Michael Ipgrave**, speaks of the example that Christ sets the world in leadership – the way of the cross, the way of service, humility and love.

“The resurrection of Jesus Christ, which his people joyfully celebrate at Easter, is the story of the vindication of one who exercised the greatest authority through the humblest of service,” he said.

“As such, it sets the best possible pattern for Charles our King at the outset of his reign. But it also speaks to all in our world and our society who are called to govern, to show leadership, to shape public opinion, to influence others.

“Too often our reality is otherwise: we see those in power trying to crush opposition, to silence dissent, or to attack those whose views differ from theirs.”

The **Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler**, says Jesus invites all of us to become his children and members of the family of God.

"Jesus, the risen Jesus, creates a whole new family. He'd been doing that with his public ministry, and in the resurrection it becomes more obvious than ever," he says.

"He invites all of us to become his children, members of the family of God, the household of God, and we're to treat one another as family members in that household of God to love one another, care for one another."

The **Bishop of Carlisle, James Newcome**, says that in the resurrection, he feels: "secure, in these turbulent and uncertain times, in the sure knowledge that God made me; loves me; and has a purpose for my life, not only here on earth but even – especially – after I'm dead.

"How do I know that? Quite simply because Jesus rose from death and promised that I will rise with him, and it's with that future hope that my present life is lived."

The **Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft**, draws on themes of forgiveness, saying that at Easter the whole world can share in the joy of transformation that forgiveness brings.

"Because of the resurrection of Jesus, everything changes," he says.

"The Earth is filled with joy and new life. Men and women and children can share in that abundant life, and in eternal life we know that we can be forgiven and begin again.

"The church is not a community of perfect people; the church is a community of forgiven people who come to Jesus knowing our need of God and longing to be changed. That inner change and transformation is the real meaning of this Easter Day."

In a video [message recorded at Holy Island](#), off the north east coast, the **Bishop of Newcastle, Helen-Ann Hartley**, speaks of fossil hunting as a child on the island. Fossils are an 'imprint' of the animal that had been there, she says.

"In many ways I think that the resurrection is the imprint of Jesus on our lives and that is a wonderful thing to be celebrating this Eastertide," she said.

She added: "Easter is that time in our lives when we relocate ourselves in the story of God."

In her message, the **Bishop of Warrington, Bev Mason**, looks ahead to the resurrection.

"As Christians we'll sometimes look to the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis as creation hinting of something of what the resurrection is like," she said.

“Easter is a story of God overcoming the world and overcoming death itself and in doing so reveals that Jesus is the only true saviour of the world.”

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