

Year C Easter Day 5th April 2026

Acts 10: 34-43, 1Corinthians 15: 19-26, John 20:1-18

Love is resurrected

‘God is love and we are God’s children. There is no room for fear in love. We love because God loved us first.’

In our liturgy every Sunday we say these words before our corporate confession to God. It is an essential component of our liturgy. It reminds us that we don’t have a vengeful, wrath-filled God, but a God of love. We respond to the love of God, by wishing to respond in love. It is one of the most important and natural responses we can make, and which God wishes us to do, of our own freewill, and replicate in our communities.

God is love, which means that Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, is also ‘love’. Jesus spent his entire ministry teaching the people he met all about love; all about what the kingdom of God would look like and helped many of them get a glimpse of it or experience it for a while. Jesus taught through action, through story-telling, through as many powerful ways as he could, to show God’s love and to emphasise the difference between the kingdom of God versus the kingdoms of the world that lived by such different values and therefore behaviours.

Jesus, the absolute perfect embodiment of love, showed the people what love looked like:

- ✝ Love fed people
- ✝ Love told stories
- ✝ Love healed the sick
- ✝ Love spoke up for the poor
- ✝ Love wept with people who were grieving
- ✝ Love challenged people who abused their positions
- ✝ Love challenged religious rules that thwarted expressions of God’s kingdom

- ✝ Love challenged rules that kept people in their place
- ✝ Love challenged people who wanted their God to be too small, too judgemental, too full of wrath; for some, a God in their own tainted image.
- ✝ Love had courage to speak truth to power, knowing the cost.
- ✝ Love was willing to remain faithful and true to love's cause, even to death.

But Easter Day has come. Love did not die. Jesus Christ is risen, alleluia!

Despite the forces of sin in the world, the human (sadly man-) made systems and processes, designed to create and maintain an elite at the cost of penury and suffering for the majority, love did not die for long.

Love was killed for challenging those sinful ways of the world. Injustice, oppression, inequality, abuse of power, wars, killings, hatred, and so on.

Love was always going to be a massive threat to people who only understood the power of arms and armies and were unable to comprehend the nature and joy of Love, or were so invested in their sinful world that they seemingly were not willing to be transformed, saved, redeemed, by Love, and to start a new life following the ways of Jesus.

Those who maintain a focus on themselves, serving solely their own needs, feeding their egos, thinking about how to get what they think is theirs by right or because of privilege, do not understand Love. They are so invested in themselves that they see any other way as being weak. They too are unwilling to be transformed, saved, redeemed, by Love, and to start a new life following the ways of Jesus.

The recent attack on Iran by the USA and Israel, the attack on Venezuela, and the blockade of Cuba by the USA, is the culmination of what happens when people, the electorate as well as the leaders they vote for, are seduced by talk of might and power, of showing strength to make others fear them, of being the bully and threatening violence and actually being violent. Unfortunately this hasn't been the first time humankind, or some subset of people have chosen violence and power, rejecting Christ's message of love for one another, and following the way of God's perfect love.

But, the resurrection tells us, demands us, to look afresh at the people we think may be lost. Love didn't die, there is always hope, hope of a new day dawning, a fresh start, a new outlook, of Love touching someone's heart, and the seed of transformation being planted.

As we watch the news, or read our newspapers, or listen to the radio, (or try to avoid much of the news because it is so depressing), we can feel like the disciples who witnessed Jesus' death and then the empty tomb, and have no hope. We can be like the disciples who returned despondent to the upper room. Or we can be like Mary Magdalene. Not a woman of ill-repute at all (as Pope Gregory impugned), but a woman whom Jesus healed and in response to that Love, she then supported his ministry.

Unlike the other disciples, Mary Magdalene remained by the tomb, and with her heart weeping with grief, was asked, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' by two angels. She was desperate to know where the body of Jesus had been taken to. She turned and not recognising Jesus she asked him to tell her where the body of Jesus was. It was only when Jesus spoke her name, 'Mary', that she recognised Jesus, and exclaimed, 'Rabboni'. Mary Magdalene became the first evangelist, bring the good news of the resurrection to the disciples in the upper room.

Recent research has it that Mary probably didn't come from the village of Magda – archaeology tells us the settlement wasn't there during the time of Jesus. However, in Greek, 'Magda' means a tower, so, maybe, just maybe, her name is much like Peter being the rock, Mary Magdalene is the tower from which the resurrection was proclaimed and believed.

The Gospel reading, in just those few words of the interaction between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, shows the sense of love between them. Not erotic love, but *philo* sort of love, brotherly or sisterly love. A Love that ran so deep, because Mary had built a relationship with Jesus over the years.

The resurrection is a reminder that we are to seek the risen Jesus in the world we live in today. We are not to take the more comforting approach of looking for an encounter with the risen Jesus in a distant future, often called the end times, when we believe all will receive their just reward. Despite living in a world where sin abounds, where the world is so messy and full of uncertainty,

we are to seek signs of the resurrection. They are all around us if only we care to look: acts of compassion and caring, generosity, justice, hope and speaking truth, and yes, acts of great love. Amongst all the news from Palestine, the West Bank, Lebanon, Iran, Ukraine, Sudan and so many other places there are good people doing good work, and seeking to show God's love and inviting others into such a life.

How do we choose to respond to the resurrection? To the fact that Love was not defeated by the imperial or religious powers, not defeated by the sin of the world. Are we able to step into the stream of people who follow the way of Christ, the way of Love, and find out what part we can play in our time and space, as an agent of Love. Are we able to submit to our own spiritual resurrection, to examining our lives, and choosing to rise up this morning, with greater intentionality to be Christ-like, recognising all our faults and imperfections, but praying from our hearts, to be Easter people, in fact, to be post-Easter people?

And what of those who seem impervious to the cares and needs of others, or who actively cause harm, intentionally or unintentionally. Maybe they need to be shown Love? A Love that feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, helps heal the sick, supports the poor and oppressed, supports the alien in our lands, is able to speak truth to power and challenge those in authority, or finds a way to show Love to someone in such a way that their life is transformed?

Yes, responding to the resurrection can be costly. But every day is a new day to help make a difference to someone, showing Christ's love. Love did not die. Jesus Christ is risen. Alleluia!