

Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life

The disciples are amazed and mystified at Jesus' resurrection, because it doesn't fit their expectation or experience of living and dying.

After all, when you die that's it . . . isn't it?

It is the apparent 'finality' of death that can worry us: if everything we held important and precious comes to an end when we die, then what in life is of any lasting value?

Jesus had frequently taught his followers not to invest all their energy in material things that decay and disappear, but to 'seek first the kingdom of God', that life in which people always come before possessions, and service of others comes before self-seeking.

Only in this way of living, which expresses the heart and mind of God, do human beings find 'the fulness of life': we need one another in order to flourish, and can make no better investment than building strong, compassionate and caring communities.

This includes taking special care of the poor, the sick and the marginalised who cannot look after themselves. It includes taking care of the dying, both medically and pastorally

– perhaps just by sitting with them in silence during their final hours on earth.

Only deeds of love and self-giving to others have eternal value, because they are the basis on which God will judge our lives: "insofar as you did this to one of the least of these, you did it to me" (Mt25:40).

Our Christian faith experience challenges us to embrace the mystery of 'life forever': in a life marked by constant growth and change, dying is not a process to be feared or fled. It is our last bridge to cross, our final moment of transition, beyond which there is only the fulness of life in God.

Nothing in our lives is meaningless when we see it in the light of eternal life: everything is gift, every deed has meaning, and every person is precious.

Some people seek death in order to escape the process of dying.

We Christians can offer an alternative witness: to see even the process of dying as a moment of infinite grace, the doorway to eternal life.



Rising you restored our life!

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Reflection

Dying he destroyed our death . . . how does it feel to know you will live forever with God?

Rising he restored our life . . . we can live that 'fulness of life' here and now!

Lord Jesus, come in glory!

If there is one great gap in the life of our community and society today, it is lack of hope.

Having travelled our annual journey through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we Christians have something to say about hope.

In the first place, Jesus' death seemed to be the point at which the apostles lost hope: when Jesus died on the cross, they thought their great adventure with him had come to a sudden, tragic end.

His resurrection, therefore, filled them with both excitement and fear: excited that there was another chapter to their journey with Jesus, but fear about where that journey might take them.

Even faith-filled Christian people can experience the same colliding feelings as death approaches: we know that after dying comes our face-to-face meeting with our loving God, but what will that be like?

Through Lent we have reflected on some of the enormous risks inherent in the WA Government proposal to introduce assisted

dying or euthanasia laws in this State, and we have noted that despite evidence that such laws are dangerous and cannot be contained in the long run, many in our society still want those options.

Perhaps the supporters of euthanasia are really signalling their lack of hope in the whole process of death and dying.

However, assisted dying laws aren't really about death. They are about managing the fear of death, and fear only drives people to extremes when they think there are no better alternatives.

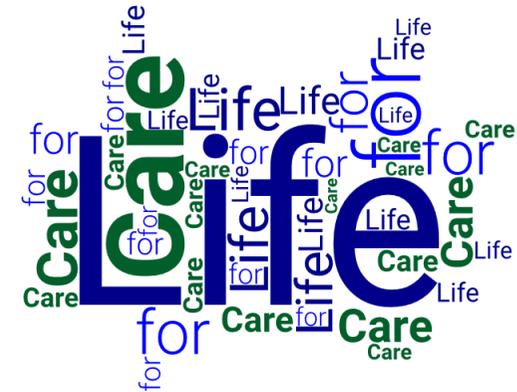
Through Lent we have reflected on some of those alternatives.

Better palliative care services, and better access to those services, would go a long way to reducing people's fear of death.

Even more effective would be greater care and compassion in health and aged care services, so much a part of our Catholic tradition here in WA, and the creation of supportive local communities to care for all and neglect no-one.

The real answer to people's fear of death lies in creating stronger, closer, more compassionate communities in which we can live and flourish, looking out for the needs of one another and building bonds of mutual support and care.

Enhanced living is always better than assisted dying.



Call to Action

Bad laws are passed only when good people say nothing. Let your MPs know what you think.

To find out how contact *Care for Life*

Email: care@careforlife.net.au

Telephone : 9242 4066

Visit our website www.careforlife.net.au