



How do we Live in an Easter World When it Still Feels Like Lent?

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I'm writing this at the start of Holy Week, but it will be published online on Maundy Thursday and then circulated next week after Easter Sunday. And what a different Easter it will be: our alleluias tempered by news of deaths and disaster, the liturgical calendar stubbornly refusing to mirror the Lent we still find ourselves in.

I didn't grow up with Lent. In my non-denominational church, we went right from Christmas to Easter, from a long celebration of the Christ Child to the celebration of the Risen Christ. I'm grateful now for the Lenten time in the desert and the idea of meditating on mortality. Never more so has hearing "You are dust and to dust you shall return" rung true than in the midst of a pandemic, but I am struggling now with the upcoming "Hallelujah he is risen!" of Easter.

More now than ever, it feels, the cracks in our society are showing themselves to be gapping chasms, brought into sharp relief by a global tragedy. They remind us that for many in our world the deep struggle of daily existence has always been there. In the U.S., about sixteen million children face hunger every year –one in five kids. There is no paid sick leave for millions of American workers, forcing them to choose between recovery or job loss – and that's their normal. Because healthcare is seen as a commodity and not a right, there are many millions who've never had access to preventative care, pandemic or not, leading to the healthcare crisis we find ourselves in. Food insecurity, employment, and healthcare access are ingrained with the systemic racism that is so pervasive in the U.S., and the flames of white nationalism are further fanned by a white supremacist President.

As Christians we're called to speak into those struggles, to speak of a world where each person's dignity and value is upheld, cherished, and treasured. We must grasp onto the prophetic promise of restoration – and that's what Easter is.

Risen he is. And risen is our faith. So I suppose the alleluias of Easter Sunday, even while we're in the deep sadness and isolation, those alleluias speak to the promise of the Gospel. Not knowing what the future looks like, or even when you can venture into the world again, is a deeply unsettling unknown. But we can anchor

ourselves in knowing what we are called to do, no matter what, as Micah 6:8 (NIV) tells us: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

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