



The Bishop of Grantham

March 2023

Dear Friends,

This letter is to wish you a joyful Easter celebration, and a very happy holiday. Please enjoy yourselves!

Easter begins in a garden. After the sadness of Good Friday, Jesus' friends go to the garden where he has been buried, to think. When they get there, they are surprised. Mary Magdalene meets a man who she thinks is the gardener. He isn't. When he speaks to her, she realises that this is Jesus. She is overjoyed that her friend is with her again.

Lots about Easter is surprising. We can be surprised to find Easter eggs have been hidden. We can be surprised to see plain wooden crosses decorated with flowers. When we go into church, what has been a very empty place for the weeks of Lent is suddenly filled with the smell and the beauty of the Easter decorations.

There are lots of sad things in the world. But Easter reminds us that there is also love and hope and new beginnings and good things.

I will go into my garden on Easter morning, open my eyes, and probably be surprised to see the flowers and the trees springing into life after the cold of winter. And I will say a prayer in my heart, to thank God for good things, and good people, and for Jesus, who brings the good news of God's love to us all.

One of the things that I enjoy doing at Easter is to make an Easter decoration for my house. I take some twigs from one of the bushes in my garden, put them in a vase of water, and hang little egg decorations on the twigs. When I cut the twigs, you can hardly see the buds, but after a few days in the water, leaves and sometimes flowers begin to open and everything is changed. The plain twigs come alive and the decoration becomes a living picture of new life - which Christians call 'resurrection'. Resurrection is the gift of life. It comes unexpectedly and it changes everything.

Whether you have a garden to enjoy or not, I hope that some time this Easter holiday you are able to go outside, and enjoy looking at God's creation. And perhaps you might join me in saying a prayer of thank you? And perhaps you might join me in making an Easter decoration? (If you do, it's probably best to ask whoever looks after your garden which bush might be a good one to cut some twigs from, because not every bush will have flowers).

With best wishes,

The Rt Revd Dr Nicholas Chamberlain
Bishop of Grantham