



BULLETIN INSERTS

March 31, 2024 – Easter (B) **The Presiding Bishop's Easter Message**

Hello to my beloved family in Christ. I want to take this opportunity, first of all, on behalf of my wife, Sharon, and our family, to thank you. To thank you for your prayers, to thank you for your well wishes, your expressions of support and kindness. We are equally thankful for the blessing of remarkable medical care and pastoral support. As you may know, I've been working a bit from home—at a reduced level, to be sure, but I'm gradually increasing that.

Just two weeks ago, my medical team approved me to drive locally and to resume short domestic flights. I can't tell you how much your prayers have sustained me and my family through this medical journey. Prayer matters. We don't always know how. We don't always know or understand the outcome.

But prayer matters, and it makes a difference. Over the last several months, I have not known how this would all work out. But I've been very aware, and in some particular moments, consciously aware of being upheld in prayer by you. Without consciously deciding to do it, I actually found myself praying some words from Psalm 31, which says, “Into your hands, I commend my spirit.”

Before surgeries and treatments, through some long nights, difficult days, “Into your hands, I commend my spirit.” These words are part of a prayer that is Psalm 31 in the Hebrew scriptures. The late night service of Compline uses that psalm as a prayer before going to sleep at night.

Luke's Gospel records Jesus praying these very words, that psalm, on the cross, when he had a sense of what lay before him, but could not know the outcome. He didn't know with any certainty if and how God would act. He didn't know, as the old preachers used to say, Good Friday's always happened, but Sunday's always coming. He didn't know with any certainty that resurrection would become real and not a mere metaphor.

But as he died into the unknown, he did one thing: He threw himself completely into the hands of God. “Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit.”

And in that moment, after saying that, Luke's Gospel says, he breathed his last. And though he died, death did not have the last word, though he did die. He died into the hands of God and slipped out of the grip of death.

And as we now know, on the third day he rose again, and he lives. As William Cowper said in a poem that later became a hymn, “God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform, he plants his footstep in the sea and rides upon the storm.”

So God love you. God bless you. May the God who rides upon our storms and raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead hold us all, the entire human family and all of God's grand and glorious creation in those almighty hands of love. Have a blessed Holy Week and Easter.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church

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