

The Episcopal Church
Office of Public Affairs

Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop's Easter Message:
“Alleluia! Keep practicing that joyful shout. Alleluia!”

[March 15, 2010] “Alleluia! Keep practicing that joyful shout. Alleluia!” proclaims Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori in her Easter 2010 Message.

The following is Presiding Bishop's Easter Message.

Easter 2010

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. (Isa 9:2; Matt 4:16)

The Diocese of Haiti has observed Lent in a very different way this year. When Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin and I spoke just before Ash Wednesday, we talked about how this year would be different. He noted that the people of Haiti would need to practice saying Alleluia, so that when Easter came they could enter in with joy. In the midst of grief and darkness, it can be exceedingly difficult to believe that resurrection is a possibility.

Nora Gallagher makes a similar point in her book, *Practicing Resurrection*.

We are not born with the ability to insist on resurrection everywhere we turn. It takes the discipline and repetition that forms an athlete – in this case, a spiritually fit Christian. We practice our faith because we must – it withers and atrophies unless it's stretched. We must continue to give evidence of the faith that is within us.

Easter prods and provokes us with an immense stretching exercise. God has renewed a life given to the evil of this world on behalf of those with no other helper. That earth-shattering and tomb-shattering rebirth has planted the seeds of hope in each one of us. Yet those seeds do not produce fruit without struggle.

The people of Haiti are finding new life in the midst of death and struggle. As a nation and a people they have repeatedly practiced resurrection through centuries of slavery, oppression, invasion, corruption, and privation. The joy of their art forms – music and painting in particular – gives evidence of the hope that is within them as a people. They know, deep in their cultural DNA, that God is continually bringing new life out of death. Yet each person must discover and nurture that hope. It is made far easier in community.

The shared hope of a community is essential. Most human beings cannot long survive the evil and death of solitary confinement or a concentration camp. It is the shared sense

of suffering and the shared nurture of even tiny embers of hope that offers life. The greatest cruelty of places like Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib is the removal and destruction of such hope. The absence or disconnection from other people as sources of hope leads to suicide and even that mysterious ailment in young children called “failure to thrive.”

The Christian community is about shared hope in resurrection. The citation at the top first buoyed hope among a people exiled in a foreign land, without the support of familiar leaders or places of worship. That people developed a community that could practice its faith in a strange land, insisting that God was present among them even in exile. Jesus insists that that light is present even in the midst of Roman oppression, and that he will gather a community to remember that light and practice seeing and discovering it.

The Christian community is meant to be a mutual hope society, with each one offering courage to another whose hope has waned, insisting that even in the darkest of night, new life is being prepared. That work is constant – it will not end until the end of all things. And still the community persists, year in and year out, in time of earthquake and war and flood, in time of joy and new birth and discovery. Together we can shout, “Alleluia, he is risen! Indeed, he is risen, Alleluia!” even when some among us are not quite so confident as others. For indeed, the body of Christ is rising and risen when even a small part of it can rejoice and insist that God is renewing the face of the earth and light has dawned upon us.

Alleluia! Keep practicing that joyful shout. Someone needs to hear its truth. Alleluia!

**The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church**

The Episcopal Church welcomes all who worship Jesus Christ in 109 dioceses and three regional areas in 16 nations. The Episcopal Church is a member province of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/presiding-bishop.htm>

The Episcopal Church: www.episcopalchurch.org

IamEpiscopalian: <http://www.iamepiscopalian.org/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/episcopalian>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/iamepiscopalian>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/TECtube>

###