

# Easter 2023

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Jesus died for us, then rose from the dead – and his rising is also for us.

He dies for us – dies in our place. It's as though a bullet's coming at you or me and a total stranger suddenly jumps in the way to take it in our place. An astounding thing to do. 'So what!' says the existentialist. 'It's a kind thing to do. But it's easy to get sentimental about it. It's pointless; it only postpones the inevitable. We all die eventually anyway. What's the difference?'

The difference is that Jesus rose again. We just heard Peter telling the household in Jaffa how he and the other witnesses ate and drank with the risen Jesus; how the risen Jesus commissioned them to proclaim a new hope to everyone.

Our existentialist got something wrong. Jesus' rising again – like his dying – was for us too. And his rising changed death itself; for us and for all life. Jesus changed death from the existentialist's inevitable end point into a transition; a transition from mortal life to abundant life. Abundant life with God, and with all whom we love.

I've been meditating over the past week on a sentence from St Paul's letter to the Romans. If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.  
5.10

Enemies!?! We are a warlike, planet-wrecking, prejudiced, self-serving species. Fair judgement of those characteristics of ours would be to leave us to suffer their consequence: unimaginable suffering and utter extinction.

Jesus puts himself between us and that extinction. He dies our death, and rises again to offer us abundant, eternal life. The life we received when that stranger took the bullet for us – it's much more than what would have remained of our earthly life. It's abundant, eternal life, no longer overshadowed by its mortal end. And it's given by Jesus, who for many is a perfect stranger. Christ is risen, Alleluia! Amen