



BULLETIN INSERTS

April 17, 2022 – Easter Day (C) The Presiding Bishop's Easter Message

An abridged version of the Presiding Bishop's Easter Message 2022 is reprinted here.

Watch and read the entire message by scanning the QR code below or visiting <https://iam.ec/easter2022>.

In Matthew's gospel, the resurrection of Jesus is introduced this way: "After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven, came and rolled back the stone before the tomb until it was open."

A number of years ago, when I was serving as the bishop of North Carolina, one of our clergy, the Rev. James Melnyk, offered a workshop on the Saturday before Palm Sunday on how to design, and color, and make Easter eggs.

I attended the workshop with a number of other people from around the Raleigh area and did my best to make an Easter egg. But Jim was a master at doing so. You see, Jim's family hailed from Ukraine, and he had been making those Easter eggs from childhood, and spoke of his grandmother and the family tradition that hailed from Ukraine, the making of those Easter eggs. I knew the significance of the Easter egg and Easter. I knew the stories and the truth and the teachings about the coming of new life into the world, and the connection of life emerging from an egg, and Jesus rising from the dead, bringing new life and hope into our world.

But it became clear to me, in the last month or so, in this time when the people of the Ukraine are struggling for their freedom, struggling to be what God intends for all people to be, free people, that, that egg, which is deeply embedded in the life and the consciousness of the people of Ukraine, that those Easter eggs are not just mere symbols, but reminders of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. Think back. On Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem, as we know, riding on a donkey. That was a deliberate act on his part.

He entered Jerusalem at about same time that Pontius Pilate, the governor of Rome, would've been entering the city from the other side, from the other gate. Pilate would've been riding a war horse, accompanied by a cavalry and infantry. He would've been riding in the streets of Jerusalem at this, the dawn of the Passover, which was a celebration of Jewish freedom. Harking back to the days of Moses and the Exodus, Pilate knew that the people would remember that God decreed freedom for all people, and that the Roman empire, which held Judea as a colony, would need to put down, by brute force, any attempt to strike a blow for their freedom.

So, Pilate entered Jerusalem on a war horse, and Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey. The way of humility, the way of the love that we know from the God who is love, the way of truth, the way of compassion, the way of justice, the way of God, the way of love. That way faced the way of the world, brute force, totalitarian power, injustice, bigotry, violence, embodied in Pontius Pilate, governor of Rome. And the rest of the week was a conflict between the way of the empire and the way of the kingdom or the reign of God's love.

