

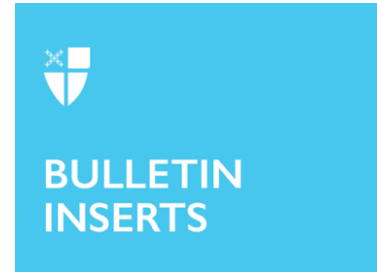
**April 7, 2024 – Easter 2 (B)**  
**Week 2: Reflections on the Resurrection**

*During the Easter season, Sermons That Work is pleased to present reflections from some of the newest bishops of The Episcopal Church on the resurrection of our Lord. Check back each week for a brief exploration of how Jesus Christ’s rising from the grave changes everything. To listen to this reflection, scan the QR code on this page and subscribe to the Sermons That Work podcast.*

Spring has always been my favorite season of the year. Winters were long in the small New England town where I lived. Spring signaled new life and growth as melting snow gave way to crocuses pushing their way upward and recess back on the playground. As a young girl, spring also brought preparations for Easter, which included Lenten fasting and spring cleaning. Each year, the house would be turned upside down as curtains, linens, walls, baseboards, windows, and cupboards were scrubbed clean until all sparkled and appeared new once again.

For me and my four sisters, it also signified throwing off the drab outerwear of winter and donning new spring coats (all in different pastel colors of course), hats, patent leather shoes, and matching dresses. A feeling of newness and possibility filled the air. As I got older, I began to understand that Easter was more than new clothes and patent leather shoes, more than straw filled baskets brimming with cream-filled chocolate eggs and lollipops shaped like bunnies. Those feelings of newness and possibility were and remain part of God’s story, the story my parents shared and lived each day.

My parents were resurrection people. They lived as best they could the life that Jesus embodied. They made sacrifices to ensure my sisters and I had what we needed to grow and thrive, and then some. They placed their trust in the Resurrection, secure in the knowledge that God was doing



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something new in their lives and in the lives of their children. The sacrifices they made were not always apparent; When I was much older, I discovered my mother had gone without a new coat for years so that my sisters and I could have new clothes each Easter. When my grandmother died, my parents invited my grandfather to live with us, so that he would not be alone in his retirement, giving up the bedroom they had just built for themselves. My parents' generosity and service, more powerful than words, demonstrated to our family and community the difference between what counts and what doesn't. My parents placed their faith and trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and lived the promises made at baptism throughout their lives.

For them and for me, Jesus' resurrection reveals true life and faith are found in those places where people, often unnoticed by others, are placing their own bodies in the shape of Jesus' life. I have the privilege of seeing this lived out in the work of our federal ministry chaplains who counsel and walk alongside our military, veterans, and the incarcerated. They support, encourage, and offer Easter hope to the young sailor who is up all night with a sick child, the veteran who tenderly cares for his wife with advanced dementia, the soldier who prays for her alcoholic brother, the prisoner who speaks out against injustice in our legal system, the airman who seeks treatment for depression, the guardian who is questioning their sexuality and place in the military, or the marine suffering from moral injury, who, through reconciliation, is able to forgive herself and others.

It takes courage to be Easter people. It takes faith to be resurrection people. It requires us to put aside the promise of security, to embrace uncertainty, and to trust no other truth than what we have seen and heard in Jesus, and to find our hope in living lives of embodied faithfulness. Easter reminds us that we can experience the risen Christ in God's word, sacrament, and most profoundly in the intimate and personal ways we live out our baptismal promises. Jesus, through his life, suffering, death, and resurrection, proved what resurrection people know to be true: Nothing, not even death, can separate us from God's love.



***The Rt. Rev. Ann Ritonia** is the VIII Bishop Suffragan to the Presiding Bishop for Armed Forces and Federal Ministries. She has served in the United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Reserve, the V.A., and as a priest and rector to parishes of all sizes. She is a resurrection person.*

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