

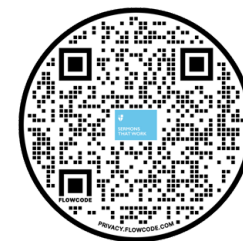


**April 27, 2025 – Easter 2 (C)**  
**Reflections on the Resurrection, Week 2**

*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.*

A number of years ago, I attended a conference that included a talk from Peter Rollins, a progressive philosopher and theologian who grew up in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. He recounted a time when he was invited to a conservative Christian college to be a part of a panel discussion. Near the end of that conversation, a student came up to the microphone and said to him, “Pete, just admit it. You deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

He was taken aback and described how he sensed every eye in that gathering focused squarely on him, including those of the other panelists. He looked at the person behind the microphone and responded: “You got me. I fully and completely admit that I deny the resurrection of Christ.” He said there was a collective gasp of air, and I heard the same in our own gathering. Then he continued, “I deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ every time I do not serve at the feet of the oppressed, each day that I turn my back on the poor; I deny the resurrection when I close my ears to the cries of the downtrodden and lend my support to an unjust and corrupt system.”



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But Pete wasn't finished yet. "However," he said, "there are moments when I affirm that resurrection, few and far between as they are. I affirm it when I stand up for those who are forced to live on their knees, when I speak for those who have had their tongues torn out, when I cry for those who have no more tears left to shed."

I was stunned. Tears welled up in my eyes.

We are resurrection people, you and I. We are those who have chosen to follow this One who came to live among us and show us the way of God. Jesus proclaimed that he would bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed, and declare the Year of Jubilee. He made it clear from the beginning that his work would be resurrection work. That he would go about making things new and whole and full of life. And so he did.

And he still does.

Far too often, we only half-believe the resurrection. We hedge our bets thinking that things might never really change, certainly not in our lifetimes. We couch our belief—*deny* is a bit too strong for us—because we've seen and experienced the chronic cynicism in our world. Yet as disciples of Jesus, as people of the resurrection, we are asked to affirm his bursting from the tomb again and again. We are invited to look into the worst of our world and see it as a place where love could dwell. We are encouraged to hope and trust and believe and then go make a difference.

We are called to affirm Jesus' resurrection.



***The Rt. Rev. Phil LaBelle** is the bishop of the Diocese of Olympia. He lives in Seattle with his spouse Melissa and their rescue pup Charlie Brown. They have two young adult children.*

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