

Friends

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

These words will be said across the country and across the world on Sunday morning as we each of us give thanks anew for the resurrection of Christ; that God is not just in heaven but has lived among us as flesh and blood.

There are those who would question the Christian understanding that no other god has become incarnate and lived among us in this way, that our story is unique. However, although some religions have stories of gods coming to earth in human form and although many religions involve humans offering sacrifices to gods, it is only in Christianity that we find a God dying for humans. In Romans 5:7-8, Paul tells us: "Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, although perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us."

In some religions there is the understanding that a god might die and live again (for example Odin sacrificed himself to himself in order to gain wisdom and continued to live at the same time as dying) but it is only in Christianity that God became human and dwelt among us and then died and rose again. As the funeral service says, "In him his people find eternal life."

So let us eat our chocolate and happily return to whatever it was we gave up for Lent, safe in the knowledge that Jesus died and rose again and that this gives hope for the future, even when we die, and a promise that there is meaning in the good and the bad of life. "Love was born at Christmas" the old carol tells us, but it could not be buried in a tomb. Love was present with the women who walked to the tomb to prepare the body, and in those who gathered in the upper room to grieve together, and it burst triumphant from the grave on Easter morning, lives anew in you and me, and is poured out on all the world.

Happy Easter, Vicci