



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Anglican Diocese of Melbourne**

209 Flinders Lane  
MELBOURNE 3000  
T: (+613) 9653 4221 F: (+613) 9650 5237  
[www.melbourneanglican.org.au](http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au)

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## **The key to Easter – God’s love will endure**

***2016 Easter message from Dr Philip Freier, Anglican Primate of Australia and Archbishop of Melbourne***

**Watch message at <http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/Easter>**

Easter is preceded by the long preparation period of Lent where Christians follow the example of Jesus' 40 days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness. For the many who take this seriously, and observe disciplines of prayer, fasting and generosity over Lent, it is a freely chosen spiritual commitment.

In much of the world, far more serious deprivation is a constant and lived reality: human evil abounds, we see evidence of it daily. For many in the world, suffering and deprivation are constant realities.

Has Easter anything to say to human evil? And if it has, what does it tell us?

On Good Friday, evil deals its merciless hand. Jesus Christ in the face of this utters the words of the peace-maker and reconciler: "turn to them the other cheek", "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you".

Nonetheless he is unjustly condemned to death by the cruel torture of crucifixion. Why then, 'Good Friday'? Surely in this death we must confront the possibility that evil has triumphed? What, too, do we make of our readiness to concede power and victory to evil?

'Good Friday' is appropriate because in his cruel death, Jesus takes evil into himself and demonstrates his triumph over it by rising from death two days later on Easter Day.

Good Friday can be claimed to be 'good' because the untold tragedy and trauma of evil is shown not to have the final word. Rather, Easter Day, the day of Resurrection, celebrates that Christ overcomes death. Life triumphs, evil does not have the last word. In Christ's Easter drama, justice and mercy are firmly grounded in our human experience.

In the narrative of Holy Week, we see the love that suffers: God's decision to engage human evil, the victory of divine love, evil's inevitable defeat and God's offer of peace.

Can the Easter love that suffers be God's rescue of our humanity and invitation to join in divine peacemaking with the accompanying presence of God?

Easter cries, "Yes!"

The darkness of human evil is all around, as always, but it is confronted in the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday, and overcome in his resurrection on Easter Day.

This biblical truth, which we celebrate week by week but especially at Easter, invites us not to lose courage in the face of human cruelty or to lose hope on account of the apparent triumph of evil and despair.

What is the resurrection promise of Easter Day? - God's love will endure and continue, no matter what. Christians look to Jesus' rising from the dead as not just an historic action but as the promise of his presence with us today – even in the worst of circumstances.

Believing and understanding this is the key to the peace of God that surpasses all understanding: the key to Easter.

Have a blessed and happy Easter.