

Happy Easter

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Why say Happy Easter? Because whether the Christian religious aspect to Easter is of relevance to you, or not, this is a traditional holiday, or period of celebration, known to humans long before its Christian connotation was adopted.

The holiday is linked to the spring equinox. The celebration is of the hope of new life that brings. The sense of well-being that inspires it comes from the increasing light and warmth of the day in the northern hemisphere. The prevailing mood is of new opportunity. There is the chance of life once more.

I think that worth celebrating of whatever faith, or none, that we are. Our essential similarity lets us share it.

It also lets us note that for many hope and opportunity are limited. That is by the choice of others.

If the Christian symbolism of sin has any meaning then that denial of well-being to some by others ranks high, in my opinion, amongst the sins for which forgiveness is required. It is certainly more important than much of the pettiness with which ranks as sin in the eyes of too many professing faith.

Living near Ely Cathedral, I find it hard to visit because of the refusal of the church to which it belongs to recognise the validity of gay relationships. This I think a particular sin on its part, indicative of too much of the division within society that those with the power to effect change are too cowardly to address when they are well aware of the significance of that change to those whose lives they harm by their refusal to embrace difference.

Easter reminds me, in that case, of the need to oppose artificially imposed division throughout our society, and beyond it. Whether that division be the vilification of the benefit claimant, or the practical denial of care to the sick and those who are dependent that creates unnecessary suffering, or the refusal to deliver timely justice to those who have been wronged, or the deliberately manufactured hostility towards those

desperate for better lives arriving here in small boats when all other means are denied to them, or the actions of those who will destroy the chances of our life in this planet when the evidence of the harm of their current actions is apparent, the reality of that division is clear to see in a world in which those with power are actively seeking to deny opportunity and hope to others.

That denial is the great sin of our time. It is the blight on our hope this Easter. It is the wrong which needs to be addressed at this moment. It is the issue for which forgiveness needs to be sought.

If the bias to the poor implicit in the message of Christianity is to have meaning in the way that Desmond Tutu saw it, then condemnation of that sin of division is the task of us all, whether of faith or none, because the understanding of that wrongdoing is available to us all.

If there is to be hope at Easter it is that division might end, and there might be opportunity for all. That is possible. It is a sin that we deny it.

I live in hope.