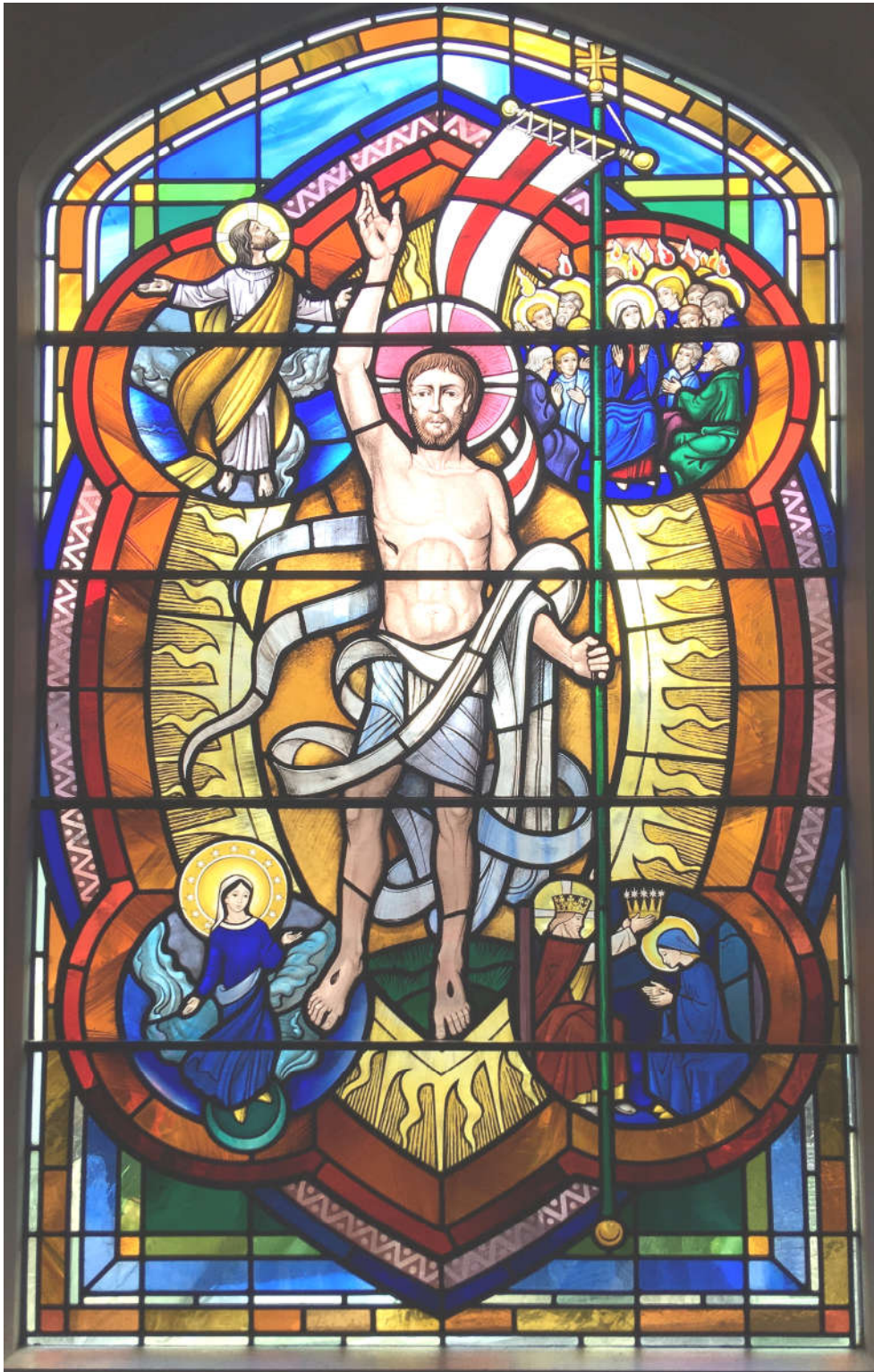


TRUE LIFE WITH CHRIST -
A MEDITATION FOR EASTERTIDE



**One of the four stained glass Rosary windows in the
Church of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, Penzance**
This window illustrates the five Glorious Mysteries.

“Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven.” (*Colossians 3:1*) from the *Mass of the Day, Easter Sunday*.

The image of the **Risen Christ in the Rosary window** is surrounded by a blue, rose and yellow mandorla (Italian = almond): an almond-shaped oval symbolizing divine glory. It is usually reserved for Jesus Himself. There is also a mandorla on the Tabernacle door.

One of the early Church Fathers, St Irenaeus wrote; “the glory of God is man fully alive.”(CCC294) Everyone is capable of friendship with God. Unlike other species we are body, mind and immortal soul. Because of the soul’s powers of memory, understanding and will, all can become “partakers of the divine nature.” (*2 Peter 1: 4*)

Many will say; “I’m not religious.” But they are nonetheless aware of the world of nature and of its increasing fragility. They are aware of goodness, beauty, truth and love, characteristics of God Himself. They have a conscience, enabling them to choose good or evil. And they have the ability to ask basic questions: why are we here? Is this the only life we have? Why do people suffer?

Our faith in the **Risen Christ** gives us so much more, and makes us fully alive. Faith gives us real hope of the eternal now of life with the Blessed Trinity in heaven. “They will see the Lord face to face.” (*Revelation 22:4*)

This hope is far greater than a vague “light at the end of the tunnel.” We know where we have come from and where we are going: to our Father’s home in heaven. “Here we have no abiding city.” (*Hebrews 13:14*) What a wonderful belief this can be for the many thousands who have suffered the loss of their loved ones. Christian teaching is clear: “God wants everyone to be saved.” (*1 Timothy 2:4*)

But there are obstacles on our pilgrim way. We are in the world but not of it. Our world was created good, but it has gone wrong.

In its New Testament meaning the 'world' refers to Satan, "the prince of this world." (*John 12:31*) Many "have been blinded" (*2 Cor. 4:4*) by "the father of lies." (*John 8:44*) So often our noblest hopes and dreams come to nothing. Because of sceptical materialism, many take no account of what they cannot see or measure. Getting and spending, "eating and drinking, buying and selling" (*Luke 17:31-37*) are the main aims of life.

Sometimes we Christians are accused of being too other-worldly, neglecting this life to worry about the next one. This is quite untrue. Many of the greatest works of charity have been achieved by saints such as St Teresa of Calcutta. Locally, many of those who work for the good of our town belong to a church.

The Christian response is that "what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." (*2 Cor. 4:18*) "Aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in as well. Aim at earth and you get neither." (*C.S.Lewis*) A letter written in about 150AD describes how many early Christians lived: "Their days are passed on the earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens...They obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws. They are misunderstood and condemned...They repay calumny with blessings and abuse with courtesy...The relation of Christians to the world is that of a soul to a body. The soul too inhabits the body, while at the same time forming no part of it; and Christians inhabit the world, but they are not part of the world." (*Breviary 2, Easter 5*)

On **Easter Day** and Pentecost Sunday we are revitalized by the Holy Spirit. St Paul contrasts the sour fruits of the world with the fruits of the Spirit. (*Galatians 5: 17-21 & 22-26*) He also tells us to "put on the whole armour of God." (*Ephesians 6:11*) And we continue to "look up" by regular attendance at Holy Mass at which we receive the "medicine of immortality" and join with the Liturgy of Heaven.

The Holy Spirit inspires us to pray. We should ask Our Lady and the Saints and Angels to help us. Our country recently held a minute's silence to reflect on what has happened during this first year of the pandemic. Even in the secular world, many recognise the need to be still. "Noise is the music of hell." (C.S. Lewis) "In reflection we ponder on all that has taken place; in prayer we bring this to our Heavenly Father...Prayer completes reflection. Reflection informs prayer. Prayer open our life to its true horizon. Without prayer we live in a foreshortened world and are more easily swamped by its clamour and tragedy." (*Statement from the Bishops' Conference*). The basic belief of all Christians: "**Jesus is Lord.**"

Recommended reading:

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| 1. Matthew 28: 1-10 | <i>The Resurrection of Jesus</i> |
| Mark 16: 1-8 | |
| Luke 24: 1-12 | |
| John 20: 1-10 | |
| Romans 10: 9 & 1: 4 | <i>"Jesus is Lord"</i> |
| 1 Corinthians 12:3 | |
| Philippians 2:11 | |
| Ephesians 6: 10-17 | <i>The whole armour of God</i> |
| 2. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) | |
| Paragraph: 362-363 & 382 | <i>Body and soul</i> |
| 638-642 | <i>The Resurrection of Christ</i> |
| 651-653 & 655 | <i>Its meaning</i> |
| 1002-1003 | <i>Risen with Christ</i> |
| 1010-1012 | <i>The meaning of Christian death</i> |
| 1014 | <i>Prepare for a good death</i> |
| 3. To be a Pilgrim by Cardinal Basil Hume (St Paul's Publications) | |
| This was first published in 1984, just as I was becoming dimly aware of a call to be received into the Catholic Church. It is still my vital guide to Christian life and death. | |