



Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

MEDIA RELEASE

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Easter Message – Singing in the Rain By Bishop Greg Thompson

I recall singing in the rain at this time of year in the streets of Kings Cross and Darlinghurst. On Good Friday each year the Roman Catholic, Uniting, Baptist and Anglican communities of Kings Cross walked the story of Good Friday and sang of Jesus' passion and of his presence in our community. Our song, rising above the city sounds, carried us to the story of crucifixion in Green Park Darlinghurst and outside the St Vincent's hospice to remember his burial. Blue sky then dark clouds, sunshine then wind and rain, paralleling our own human journey of faith in the city, through troubled times and good times. The voices that sang of sadness, of love and of faith in One who still walks with us are the sounds of Good Friday.

There are human sounds of our own dying and rising in Holy Week. For life and death, endings and beginnings, holding on and letting go, turning away or embracing, breaking and mending, these are the sounds of our human experience. And in the Holy season we remember that they are echoes of the sounds of crucifixion and of an empty tomb.

The sounds of dying and rising are heard on many levels at present. We have daily reminders of tribal and national interests around the planet that give voice to war and destruction. Yet in these fragile times, how often do we see the capacity of individuals and groups to demonstrate life, kindness and grace in the midst of the ash and suffering.

Last July an extraordinary young woman said these words to the UN, "It takes one teacher, one student, one pen, one book" to change a world. Malala, a young Pakistani girl was shot in the head on a school bus for speaking up about education for girls, was now speaking about the one thing that was needed for every child on the planet. At the United Nations on her 16th birthday she delivered a powerful response to her attempted murder by radicals. "They thought that the bullet would silence us. But they failed," she said.

Multiple operations in Pakistan and the UK followed the attack on the bus, including the fitting of a titanium plate on her left forehead, and a cochlear implant to restore her hearing. She now lives with her family in Birmingham UK and does what the Taliban tried to stop her doing – goes to school every day. "I am not against anyone," she said in the UN chamber, having taken this day out from the classroom. "Neither am I here to speak in terms of personal revenge against the Taliban or any other terrorist group." [Adapted from *The Guardian* ed Pilkington Jul 12 2013]

At a national level dying and rising is a recurrent theme in our nation's history. The sounds of the bugle in the dawn services across Australia this month draw us again to the important remembering of Service men and women who gave their lives in times of war and conflict for our peace. We will also remember on May 26 Sorry Day in the lives of First Australians; the story of terrible dying of their communities with European settlement, the dispossession of their lands, the destruction of their culture and the removal of children. Their songs will be a reminder to recognise them in our Constitution. We need to sing a new song in our communities with indigenous people.

The dying and rising of Jesus provides us with an overarching vision for working for justice in our country even when leaders are hardened against the cries of the stranger to our shores and on Manus Island, or for local communities who become so hardened to people on the street that they'd prefer parks for "nice" people rather than genuine care for the disadvantaged, or economic decisions that empty factories and displace workers from employment. The

dying and rising of Jesus in us leads us to a deeper commitment to witness to the hope of life over death, among the so called history of the losers.

Our sounds of struggle for justice await the cry "Christ is risen" and the possibilities of courage and redemption in us and in the world. May our Holy Week have the sounds of Jesus' rising in you and your family and friends, a symphony of hope, faith and love to your ears - the sounds of singing in the rain.

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