

An Easter message to the people of St. James Emily....

Several years ago newspapers were full of a story about Justin Clark. Justin was a 20-year-old with cerebral palsy, whose life up to that point had been lived mostly in hospitals. He caught the attention of the press because he was asking the court to declare him “mentally competent” – that is, capable of making his own decisions about where to live.

Justin wanted out of hospital and wanted to try living with friends -- this, despite being confined to a wheelchair and unable to speak.

His parents opposed the request, arguing that Justin was just too handicapped to leave the hospital. The judge found the trial very difficult, but when he finally made his ruling, he decided in favour of Justin. He said, “I believe a courageous man such as Justin Clark is entitled to take a risk. With incredible effort, he has managed to communicate his passion for freedom as well as his love of family. We have recognized a gentle, trusting believing spirit and very much a thinking human being who has his unique part to play in our society.

When Justin heard that, he whooped for joy, and in a way, so did I as I read the story.

Justin was seen as more than just a body – he was a personality. He was more than a torso or a voice that did not function as most around him did.

- When we are handicapped
- When we are aged and frail
- When we are body beautiful
- When we are bald and overweight
- When we have the complexion of a baby or the hands of a labourer

We are persons and personalities – Stephen Hawking, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Terry Fox and Justin Clark – ALL of us!

When I realize that, the Creed takes on a new meaning for me, and....*We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.* I understand that resurrection is not just about matter, it is about life. When we say, “I believe in the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting”, it is not so much about the opening of graves and revival of skeletal corpses. It does not mean a return to earthly life.

- What we believe by resurrection is that life has a purpose and a quality that does not end at the grave.
- We believe that the God who created us does not create us to abandon us, but brings us finally, somehow, home to the fullness of life.
- Resurrection is simply another part of the process of growing into God.
- *“Life as we know it, time as we chart it, are simply temporary points in an eternal journey in a universe of unlimited mystery and endless possibility.”*
- The creed’s call to resurrection belief stretches our vision of life, gives us back the glory of the earthy, and calls us to a life beyond the earthy

The Creed affirms that life is good, not evil, and that life as we know it is not all there is:

- Like an idea that becomes a song
- Like a seed that becomes a flower
- Like a match that becomes a flame

We will someday come to a new kind of life – a life that is eternal in spirit and changed in its form. That proof is all around us – metamorphosis – it is the very nature of life and it is vividly and resoundly proclaimed in the Easter message.

“We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.”

Yours faithfully,

Milton +