

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE



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Easter Message 2017

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 28 verse 2 we read, "*And suddenly there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord descending from Heaven came and rolled back the stone and sat on it*".

The stone which closes the tomb symbolises the obstacles in our lives that prevent us from living life to the full. Many of us have an experience of the obstacles that get in the way of us being free. For example, holding on to hurts and wounds of the past that are festering away deep down within us and possibly paralysing us. Sometimes fear of the future gets in the way. At other times people can weigh us down like a big boulder. Some way or another they seem to have power over us; they cramp our style. In their presence we cannot be our true selves, we feel a heavy weight on our shoulders.

When resurrection happens an angel comes into our lives and rolls the stone away. That angel may be another person who has a kind word for us. Maybe even just something as simple as a smile, a word of affirmation. We may experience resurrection when we spend time in prayer letting God in and allowing him to take over. Allowing Him to

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touch us in the depths of our being, to dispel the darkness as His light shines. On occasions like this the weight that stops us from living is removed – suddenly we are set free; we are no longer weighed down.

The angel seats itself on the boulder like a victor. The boulder becomes a symbol of the victory of life over death. It reminds us that a miracle has taken place, that our tomb has been broken open and we are set free. Now we are in a position to live life to the full - this is resurrection.

"All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of His resurrection. To share in His sufferings, to become like Him in His death in the hope that I myself will be raised from death to life". There is no resurrection without the cross. Cross and resurrection go hand in hand. Far too often we try to go it alone, to heal ourselves, to set ourselves free. It is in dying to ourselves that we are set free. We must journey with Christ every step of the way and this means entering into and embracing His passion, suffering and death if we are to experience resurrection and new life.