

On Easter, a tribute to sacrifice of farmers

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About 2,075 million Christians all over the world, belonging to all denominations, will celebrate Easter on April 4, which marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ after his death by crucifixion and burial in Jerusalem about 2,020 years ago. Easter is victory over death, a celebration of new life. It symbolises the ultimate victory of good over evil.

Easter is preceded by Lent, a 40-day period of fasting, prayer and penance, representing the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, withstanding the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his public ministry of teaching and preaching.

Easter marks the conclusion of the Holy Week; it is the last day of the Easter Triduum of Maundy Thursday (commemorating the Last Supper Jesus had with His apostles), Good Friday (the day of His crucifixion and death) and Easter Sunday (the day of His Resurrection).

Why is the day of Jesus's death called Good Friday? It may seem counterintuitive to many people. His death was, in reality, a passage from life to



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eternity. His death symbolises His ultimate sacrifice for others and thus represents the cleansing of the Earth from wickedness, the deadness of despair and dependency.

This Easter, I remember as many as 248 farmers who have sacrificed their lives and all the other farmers who are protesting against the three Central farm laws. I remember my fellow Jesuit, octogenarian Fr. Stan Swamy, a tribal rights activist from Ranchi, in Jharkhand, who has been refused bail on March 22 by the special court in Mumbai.

I remember the people of Myanmar who are protesting against the military coup. The civilian death toll in the security forces' crackdown on protesters has gone up to 320. Crimes against humanity continue in Myanmar and in other parts of the world daily.

I remember Sister Ann

Rose Nu Tawng, the brave Catholic nun in the city of Myittha, Myanmar, who knelt down and begged a group of heavily armed police officers to spare "the children" and take her life instead.

I remember the 2.8 million people in the world and 162 thousand in India diseased due to Covid-19. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) predicts that the 'crisis is far from over'. Its second wave is here and the third is expected with grave consequences.

Easter is the manifestation of the banquet of life, of ordered festivity. The power of Resurrection makes human beings, and the entire universe, new. It makes people strong and transforms them into spiritual beings. With the spiritual power one is able to recognise God's footsteps as, 'He comes, comes, ever comes'.

Jesus preached, 'There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends' and he lived according to his teachings. Easter promotes the sense of taking brave steps and laying down one life for a humanitarian cause. Are we ready?

I wish my fellow Calcuttans a joy-filled Easter. May this season usher in peace, justice and harmony in our lives and relationships.

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