

My sermon on Easter Sunday this year and every year was a breeze. It's easy for me to stand up here as a minister and say that Christ is risen, that all of us are now radically changed, and in fact the whole world that we live in has been completely transformed by Christ's death and resurrection. That's exactly what I said on Easter Sunday. And, then, all of you chimed in to say, "Christ is risen indeed...yes, we believe that." And, then all of us went home to an Easter dinner with friends and family, knowing that we are good Christians because we are absolutely certain about what we believe.

But, at some point, belief is not enough. At some point it becomes necessary for us as "good Christians" to figure out what our beliefs mean in light of the real world, because in 2025 the world seems to be anything but transformed. No, our world is a place where evil and death reign supreme and are unchallenged on our part most of the time.

And, then on Easter Monday Pope Francis passed away and it reminded me that action over belief was the hallmark of his tenure as head of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis' words were a call to action to meet the needs of the poor, the hungry, the down-trodden, the ostracized, and the marginalized.

Pope Francis continued this theme during his final blessing given on Easter Sunday from the balcony over St. Peter's square entitled "Urbi et Orbi" or "To the City and to the World".

"The light of Easter impels us to break down the barriers that create division and are fraught with grave political and economic consequences. It impels us to care for one another, to increase our mutual solidarity, and to work for the integral development of each human person...

I appeal to all those in positions of political responsibility in our world not to yield to the logic of fear which only leads to isolation from others, but rather to use the resources available to help the needy, to fight hunger and to encourage initiatives that promote development. These are the "weapons" of peace: weapons that build the future, instead of sowing seeds of death!"

The Pope's Easter sermon which he had prepared followed his blessing and due to

his ongoing struggle with bilateral pneumonia was read by Archbishop Diego Ravelli and included these thoughts...

"This is the message of Easter: we must look for him elsewhere. Christ is risen, he is alive! He is no longer a prisoner of death, he is no longer wrapped in the shroud, and therefore we cannot confine him to a fairy tale, we cannot make him a hero of the ancient world, or think of him as a statue

in a museum! On the contrary, we must look for him and this is why we cannot remain stationary. We must take action, set out to look for him: look for him in life, look for him in the faces of our brothers and sisters, look for him in everyday business, look for him everywhere except in the tomb...

For this reason, our Easter faith, which opens us to the encounter with the risen Lord and prepares us to welcome him into our lives, is anything but a complacent settling into some sort of "religious reassurance." On the contrary, Easter spurs us to action..."

This week Pope Francis ran into the tender embrace of a loving God. Yes, we Christians are certain of this belief and of many others taught to us by prophets of old and by Jesus, himself. But, may we never forget that as followers of Jesus, belief is not enough. We must also remember Pope

