

Easter Year A 2026

The Reverend William Barber is an African American pastor, and preacher extraordinaire. He is widely known, nationally known, as the founder of the *Poor Peoples Campaign*, an organization that advocates for the just inclusion of the marginalized into American society... recognizing that there is enough wealth in our country, and in the world for that matter, that all people share in the earth's abundance; that all people have sustainable resources to live lives of dignity and well-being. Some of you may remember that he spoke here at All Saints during the aftermath of the murder of Jawan Dallas.... An unarmed black bystander in a police operation at which he was tazed to death.

Rev. Barber sends out a regular newsletter; and is a frequent podcaster. Just last week he published his sermon from Palm Sunday. In it he made the connection between the No Kings protest rally that had just occurred across this nation, including Mobile, on the previous Friday...He connected the No Kings rally to Jesus's so-called 'triumphant' ride into the city of Jerusalem that occurred just before his arrest and execution, some two thousand years ago. Both, he argued, were acts of resistance... both were organized protests, political theater, calling out the corruption and hypocrisy of the state, the government, the empire... the powerful. Both of these accounts are testimony to those who choose courage to

stand up against evil. His point, of course, was that some things never change. The problem that engenders all of our problems is that power is captured by an elite few creating a disproportionate injustice between those who have, and those who have not; and inevitably such injustice leads to violence and death... so we say in chorus as Christian folk... No Kings!

You may say, Jim... what does this have to do with Easter? Isn't this about bunnies, pastels, and an ever so fleeting happiness? And the answer is: This is the troublesome context within which we proclaim resurrection: A fear riddled world, broken by self-interest and greed and violence, which paradoxically is the fertile soil of Jesus's rising. That makes the Gospel message, the Good News, decidedly social, economic, and political. Resurrection isn't fluffy theology, it is theology that matters. The word for resurrection in the Greek is *ἐνερίη*... which literally means to 'stand up.' Resurrection is that which stands against the deathly injustice and evil in our world. It is a choice for life up and against the shroud of death that covers our daily lives. On this day we gather in witness to the power of life over death. Perhaps now more than ever in our history, we are overwhelmed by grief, exhaustion, and despair at the daily diet of bad news over the oppressive absurdities unleashed upon us by the powers that be. And though empire has

always been the problem; it is not normal; it is not true... and we, brother and sister followers of Jesus belong to the truth.

Since January, we have followed Jesus from his baptism, driven by the Spirit to resist evil and to announce the Good news of God's new society, God's true society... enacting this good news by feeding, and healing... declaring God's forgiveness without conditions. We heard him talking to Nicodemus about rebirth by water and spirit; and to the Samaritan woman about living water... he spoke of the ways to live in the truth... and he challenged the corruption and brutality of Rome, the occupier of his land... he challenged his own religious authority, the temple priests and scribes, calling out their complicity to that occupation; their smug hypocrisy... And he paid the price, as all scapegoats pay the price.

And yet, our faith says that evil and death are not the last word. Shall we own that, good people? When stony evil is confronted openly, freely, and resolutely... most often at great cost, it cracks open into new life. This is not mere sentimental spirituality... the proverbial pie in the sky... this is a pattern of our existence on earth... death to life... death to life... We've seen the pattern over the vast sweep of history. Jesus suffered and died, but now he lives, we proclaim. How can this be? St. Paul puts it this way: Don't you know that when you were

baptized into Christ, you were immersed in his death. You were buried with him in an imitation of his death; so that you may stand with him in an imitation of his resurrection. The pattern; the mystery.

There, in that water, we like Macy, Charlotte, Henry, and Valentina last night... we died and rose again with Christ. We too renounced evil and were born again from God in the font.... Baptism, our grave and our mother. There we left behind our first life and were welcomed into a second life, a royal priesthood; were branded as Christ's own forever to be the very heart and soul of Christ in the world. We stand as he stood against the forces of the world that would undo our very humanity, a humanity made in God's image. We bear the raised Christ in our very bodies. His life is our life, and we pour out that life for the world. And as the baptized there is no turning back.

Like our brother Jesus, we will not worship the gods of the state... or of Wall Street, or of artificial intelligence. We speak truth to power with integrity. Even to the church. We dear friends are the uprising of Jesus, exposing the powerlessness of the powerful; a peaceful uprising in acts of Love, solidarity, advocacy, and resistance. We refuse to worship and serve safety, fear, money, prestige, power, or even survival. Jesus Stands again, in and among us, his

people... a people who know that resurrection isn't an ancient fantasy, put a present reality that will transform Hate into Love, and Love into justice. The passion of the Christ courses in our very bodies, resides in our DNA.

So stand up good people... The time to arise is now. Stand with the poor, and the broken hearted. Stand with the incarcerated and the sick; stand with the Epstein victims; stand with the people of Minneapolis. Stand with our brothers and sisters in Gaza, Iran, Ukraine, and Lebanon. Stand with the immigrants detained in concentration camps being built as we speak all over this country. Stand with the millions of crucified around the world on this exhausted planet. And last, Stand against any man who would presume to be king... for we have no king but God in Christ... and he is raised among us now and forever. Why then shall we weep?