

## **"Afraid and Filled with Joy"**

from the Sojourners magazine team at Remembering death and proclaiming resurrection in a time of global pandemic

This year, Holy Week is different. Our Christ is exhausted from extended shifts in the emergency room, from waking up at night with anxiety about paying rent, from the unrelenting coughs echoing through a detention center. Our Christ has flu-like symptoms and is experiencing shortness of breath.

We meditate on Christ's agony in the garden: The tears are heavy, the blood too real. We remember Jesus' many followers who could not be at the foot of the cross on pain of death - and all the grieving families today who can't be present with their loved ones. Good Friday is inescapable.

And we cannot be physically present with our congregations to participate in traditional Holy Week rituals of palm-waving, foot-washing, candle-extinguishing, altar-stripping, and silence-keeping.

In a recent Zoom conversation with Palestinian Christian leader Nora Carmi, Sojourners senior editor Rose Berger asked how we can celebrate an embodied resurrection when we can't go to church. "Let me tell you something from the land where the whole thing actually happened," Nora said. "In Easter 2020, we get to celebrate like the first disciples did. There wasn't 'church' or 'priests' or fancy worship services - there was only the good news that Jesus had risen from the dead! Now go and tell it as fast as you can!"

So, we might wash the hands of the others in our household, a sign that we are all in this together. We can blow out candles on Thursday night and take the cloth off the kitchen table. On Friday, we can join online stations of the cross and keep a Great Silence. On Saturday, we might dye Easter eggs - especially the red ones that signify Mary Magdalene's message. And on the glorious Sunday morning, stand outside and listen to the church bells toll, sing your favorite Easter hymn, write "He is Risen" using sidewalk chalk, and maybe even take an Easter stroll in the early morning with your best hat on.

This Easter we can remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus with eyes more readily attuned to the abandonment and uncertainty as well as the embodied liberation that is our Christian Easter memory.

Amen