



Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

The hope of resurrection

In modern Western societies, there are different ideas about dying and death. Some believe in complete extinction after death. Very few people in Europe hold to the complete denial of a future afterlife. Many believe in one form or another of life after death. After the British Princess Diana died in a road accident, a message went viral that sounded as if she had written it herself: "I have not left you at all. I am in the sun and in the wind. I am even in the rain. I have not died, I am with you all." This expressed a belief in the immortality of the soul. Many Europeans think that this view corresponds to a traditional Christian belief.

Death and resurrection in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the hope of a continuation of life after death is closely linked to the person of Jesus Christ. At the tomb of his friend Lazarus, Jesus spoke to Martha, who was mourning the death of her brother: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even if he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

These statements are clarified in another New Testament account (Luke 23). Two other men were led to execution together with Jesus. One of the two criminals said to Jesus: "Remember me when you begin your reign as king!" Jesus replied: "I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Dying, Jesus explained the way to eternal life to a dying man. The man who was executed with Jesus seized this moment of God's grace. Jesus' death on the cross opens the door to paradise for all those who believe in Jesus as Saviour.

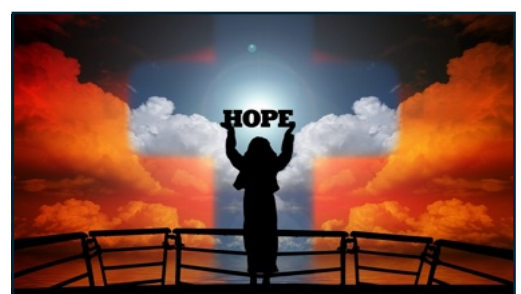
After Easter, Jesus added another indication that he is *life*: his new body as the resurrected one. To show the astonished disciples that he is not a ghost, he eats and drinks in front of them. But his body is no longer bound to space and time. Jesus walks through walls and closed doors to his frightened disciples. Paul reports in 1 Corinthians that Jesus later appeared to more than 500 people at the same time as the resurrected Christ.

The English theologian N.T. Wright wrote: "This is the point at which we modern Westerners are asked to make a great leap in our imagination. We think we know that tangible objects are one thing and spirit is quite another. There will be a new kind of physicality. The new body will be as real as our current body. There is no incorporeal spirit! What God has in store for us in heaven is a body that has already been customised."

The accusation that the disciples made up Jesus' resurrection persists to this day. The American pastor Timothy Keller has studied the historical sources on the resurrection intensively: "The world view of the first Christians was something never seen before. And it was immediately ready after the death of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus cannot be proven scientifically. But historically, it is the best explanation as to why so many people were radically changed within such a short time, starting with the disciples."

The Christian hope of resurrection

What happens when people die who believe in Jesus? They remain intimately connected to Jesus and his resurrection power. "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living" (Luke 20:38). Even those who have 'died in Jesus' remain in God's presence and are with him as his living and beloved children. "Today you will be with me in paradise"; these words of Jesus to the criminal



crucified with him point to something very beautiful and a life after death. The German theologian Fritz Rienecker wrote: "At the same moment that earthly life expires in death, at the same moment the gates of heavenly paradise open. For all those who belong to Christ, they go to him at the moment of death."

For the first Christians, the hope of resurrection was real. The apostle Paul wrote (Philippians 1:23): "Most gladly I would leave earthly life behind and be with Christ; that would be best by far." There is nothing in his words about sleeping or falling asleep as an image for being dead. In his letter to the Christians in Corinth, Paul wrote further (2 Cor. 5): "If our earthly house, this tabernacle, is torn down, we have a building built by God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."



This metaphor of the house built in heaven is a powerful image for the new heavenly body of people who believe in Jesus. It can be understood in such a way that the demolition of the earthly hut merges seamlessly with the move into the new building.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the greatest event in the history of mankind. It was only through his resurrection that the cross became the powerful symbol of redemption for all people and changed the face of death. Now death is no longer an uncertain abyss, but the transition into God's new world.

Prayer points:

- Pray that all Christians in Europe will understand the great hope to which they are called through the resurrection of Jesus.
- Please pray that European politics, legislation and society will be more pro-life and that the 'culture of death' (wars, assassinations, euthanasia, abortion, destruction of the environment) will decrease.
- Pray for a spiritual revival in Europe and that many people will recognise Jesus as 'the way, the truth and the life'!

Moldova

Our sister prayer movement, Europeans United in Prayer (EUIP), will be meeting in Moldova next week for a gathering.

Moldova is a small country between Romania and Ukraine, its population is just 2.4 million. Like many former soviet nations there is always a constant tension, particularly at the moment being so close to the war in Ukraine.

Many older people look back to the Soviet days and are pro-Russia. The young people are mostly pro-European Union. So the country is split between the generations. God gave Wolfgang Rathmann a prophetic picture about this and the Moldovan pastors agreed. So we will pray that both generations join together and look upwards to God!

Many Moldovans work in other countries and their children are living with the grandparents. They don't see their parents often. Alcohol-abuse, corruption, increasing poverty ... the list is long. But we know that God has not forgotten this country and has his eyes on it. Please pray..

Further Prayer:-

1. Let us pray for our leaders, both national and EU, as they decide how to respond to USA trade tariffs.
2. Let us pray for Myanmar and the ongoing response to the earthquake. Please pray for European nations as they seek to find ways to help the people of this country overshadowed by its military regime.

The Canopy team would like to wish you a very blessed and joyful Easter.



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