



BISHOP OF QUEBEC • ÉVÊQUE DE QUÉBEC

Quebec City, Easter 2021

Dear friends,

Perhaps more than usual, this Easter *feels* like resurrection. After what amounts to a year-long season of Lent, we are finally starting to emerge from the darkness and death of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccinations are rolling out. Restrictions are loosening. Many of us are—unlike last year—able to gather in our church buildings to celebrate God in Christ’s decisive victory of light and life. Things are starting to return to normal. But should they?

In the early days of COVID-19, Sonya Renee Taylor wrote this poem:

*We will not go back to normal. Normal never was.  
Our pre-corona existence was not normal  
other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion,  
extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack.  
We should not long to return, my friends.  
We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment.  
One that fits all of humanity and nature.*

The opportunity before us is to stitch a *new* garment, not simply to patch up the holes revealed or made bigger by the pandemic. Crafting a whole new garment takes longer and is harder work than a patching job, but the result is lasting. Perhaps Jesus was placing a similar kind of challenge before his hearers when he said, “No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.”

Jesus didn’t come preaching a piecemeal approach to making the world a slightly less miserable place to live out our days. He came proclaiming an utterly transformed kingdom of justice and peace—one that renounces the litany of normalized ills Taylor describes in her poem and instead embraces their opposites: generosity, equity, rest, stewardship, restoration, community, clarity, peace, sharing, love and abundance.

“Unprecedented” is perhaps the most overused word of the pandemic. But the consequences of COVID-19 are indeed providing us with an unprecedented—and rapidly fleeting—opportunity as individuals, households, communities, churches, societies, and a global family to stitch a new garment of the kind that Jesus envisions: “one that fits all of humanity and nature.” Or we can just try and patch things up in hopes of restoring a normal that never was, and risk worse tears in our collective fabric in the future.

So as we start to “go back to normal” this Easter, let us ask: how then shall we sew?

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