

Easter Message 2021

"The Lord is risen - he is truly risen!"

I greet you all, dear brothers and sisters in the worldwide Gossner family, with the classic Easter greeting from the early church! Last year I was able to pass on this Easter greeting as Vice-President of the Gossner Mission - I am happy to be able to greet you all this year as the new President of our mission organisation!

Life in India and Nepal, in Zambia and Uganda is still affected by the Corona pandemic – just like here in Germany. Every news programme, all newspapers and also many sermons in our churches are still dominated by this virus. But Easter is the feast where we proclaim the victory of life over death! Easter celebrates the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing and no one else should dominate us now but the great joy in our living Lord and Saviour!

No, we cannot ignore suffering, and we must continue to be cautious in the face of danger. But fear and terror must not be spread by the virus now! Shouldn't our Christian joy, our Christian hope, our Christian trust in God be much, much stronger in this Easter season?!

A great theologian, to whom I personally owe much, once spent many decades writing his Dogmatics. This great work comprised many volumes and thousands of pages. When, after years, he came to the subject of evil and was to write about the devil and demons, many Christians were very anxious to hear what he had to say about it, and many hundreds of pages were expected. How surprised everyone was when the great theologian published the new volume: there were only a few pages about evil, the devil and demons! Why was that? The great theologian smiled and said in an interview: If we look into the jaws of evil for too long, we fall in!

Yes, there is such a thing as a fascination with evil. The great theologian did not succumb to this fascination. And we must not succumb to this

fascination even in times of the Corona pandemic! If we look into the jaws of evil for too long, we fall in! The virus must not also cast a mental spell over us and take hold of us. The many, many pages about the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ and His friendly rule over the whole wide world should be much more fascinating! We belong to His Kingdom - we celebrate His victory over death - we experience His Holy Spirit in us and around us, right now!

Dear brothers and sisters, we have thought of each other and prayed for each other in the time of Passion - in the time of suffering. How much more do we think of each other and include each other in our prayers during this Easter season. We are carried by the same Christian certainty, everywhere in the world: nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ: our Lord and Saviour, who overcame death and gives us all His life!

As an old German Easter chorale sings: "Let us all be merry / in this Easter time; / for God has prepared our salvation. Hallelujah! Praised be Christ, Mary's Son." < **Chant: „Wir wollen alle fröhlich sein ...“** >

I wish you all a happy, indeed a joyful and blessed Easter!

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Dr. Helmut Kirschstein

President of Gossner Mission