

Easter message 2022 from Rt Rev. Julian Henderson, Bishop of Blackburn

Sometimes it is hard to know who and what to believe.

The Radio 4 programme 'The Unbelievable Truth' invites panel members to read a piece of made up information, within which there are some true statements.

The other panel members are encouraged to spot the truths. It's a fun game.

What is happening now in Ukraine is not a game and tragically the statements from Russia cannot be trusted.

It is hard to know what are true undertakings and promises; too many times their words have proved untrue and that makes diplomacy almost impossible.

How can peace talks (at the time of recording still ongoing) make any progress when trust has been lost, promises are broken and lies become normal?

It's a really sad moment when it is impossible to believe what someone else says.

At this Easter time, we rejoice that what Jesus said proved to be true.

He said on several occasions that He would be crucified and on the third day be raised. Both of those seemed unbelievable at the time.

How could the One who claimed to be God in human form allow Himself to be arrested, tried, condemned and killed? That was unbelievable enough!

And then to claim He would come back to life and appear to His disciples? That was off the scale.

But that is what happened to Jesus all those years ago, proving the truth of His words. He died and rose again! And that is one reason why I take Him seriously. He not only told the truth, as His death and resurrection make clear, but claimed to be the truth.

'I am the way, the truth and the life.'

He set Himself apart from His enemy the devil, whom He called the father of lies; both deceived and deceiving.

Truth telling is essential, because trust is required if we are to live in peace and harmony with our neighbours.

So, at this time of crisis for world peace, we must pray for discernment for the media, for Ukrainian and Russian people and for the world. To know what the truth really is, for lives to be spared, for geographical boundaries to be respected and for forces of aggression to be restrained.

And we do so confident in the One who is sovereign over all human authority, who will hold us all accountable for how we live our lives and to whom one day every knee will bow.

And it is with that hope that I wish you all a Happy Easter.

ENDS