

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF CATHOLIC KNIGHTS



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Michael Bell Memorial Awards 2004

Member Orders are now invited to make nominations for both categories of these awards

CATEGORY ONE

A citation for this award should not exceed five hundred words and should describe an "Initiative For Life" taken by a Member Order at National level or by a State, Provincial or Regional Council, or by a Local Council or Individual Brother.

CATEGORY TWO

A citation in this category should also not exceed five hundred words and should describe an "Initiative for Life" taken by any individual or group not within membership of the Alliance.

Submissions should be made via the head office of each Member Order, by whom it should be endorsed and must reach the [Secretary General](#) by **August 31st 2004**.

These will be considered by an award group, appointed by the International President. This group will select those nominations which they consider to have taken an 'Initiative for Life' which has made a significant contribution to defending the principle of the Right to Life of every human being. Those chosen will each receive the Michael Bell Memorial Award.

This scheme encourages Member Orders to make a careful assessment of their work to protect all Human Life. It also requires them to observe and support the work of other individuals and organisations who share our concern for the most vulnerable and defenceless members of society. It also provides an excellent way to give International recognition to those who take real "Initiatives for Life" and demonstrate that their efforts are recognised and supported. The Awards have been instrumental in highlighting the work of deeply committed people and groups, providing an example of service to all.

Easter Message

A message for Easter from our International Chaplain Bishop Donal McKeown follows:

Easter People

Easter is a time of the year when promise seems to be in the air. At least in the Northern Hemisphere, the Christian celebration of our Redemption and the Jewish feast of Passover echo the hope that lies at the heart of Spring. And the cycle of the Church's liturgical year reinforces again the core of the Good News - Christ is risen.

But if we try to understand the Resurrection, we sometimes end up wondering if and how Jesus has risen from the dead. What sort of body did he have? Was he visible, touchable? Some theologians even deny that Jesus was actually raised. The Gospel stories give us only hints as to exactly what happened. For I believe that even the apostles weren't too sure how to explain it. But they knew that death had not conquered him.

But the Resurrection fits into the big picture at the heart of the Good News, and we can best understand Easter within the context of the full story of our creation and redemption.

Firstly, we were all of us created in God's image and likeness. (Genesis 1:27) As such we were created to live forever. Thus many beautiful phrases in the Old Testament can be applied to each one of us. "I have branded you in the palm of my hand" (Isaiah 49:16). "I have called you by your name and you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1), "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you came to birth, I consecrated you" (Jeremiah 1:5).

And even when we had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, God so loved the world that he sent his only Son that all who believe in him might have eternal life (John 3:16). On Good Friday, all the sins of the world were loaded upon the shoulders of Jesus (Isaiah 53:3-6). All the greed, violence, hatred, exploitation, injustice of the world appeared to crush him.

But on Easter Sunday, He was raised by the Father. The Resurrection – however it happened - did not take place in order to show off or just to puzzle the disciples. The Resurrection proclaimed that the love of the God is greater than all the sin of the world put together, that there is more grace in the world than evil, more good than bad, more hope than despair. And that was the Good News message that the disciples were to proclaim. Death and sin could not erase our dignity and our destiny. For those who turn to Jesus, the work of the Evil One could have no ultimate victory.

And that is the vision that drives all of our organisations and all of our work as Church. In a world of much beauty and much horror, God still loves this world. That is a proclamation of human dignity and destiny. That is why we seek to put political power, economic success and human achievement in a different context. They are not bad or good in themselves. But they only find their place if they serve the building up of human solidarity.

We have walked with Jesus through Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the desolation of Holy Saturday. But now we are an Easter people – and Alleluia is our song.

**Bishop Donal McKeown
Belfast, Northern Ireland
Chaplain to the International Alliance**