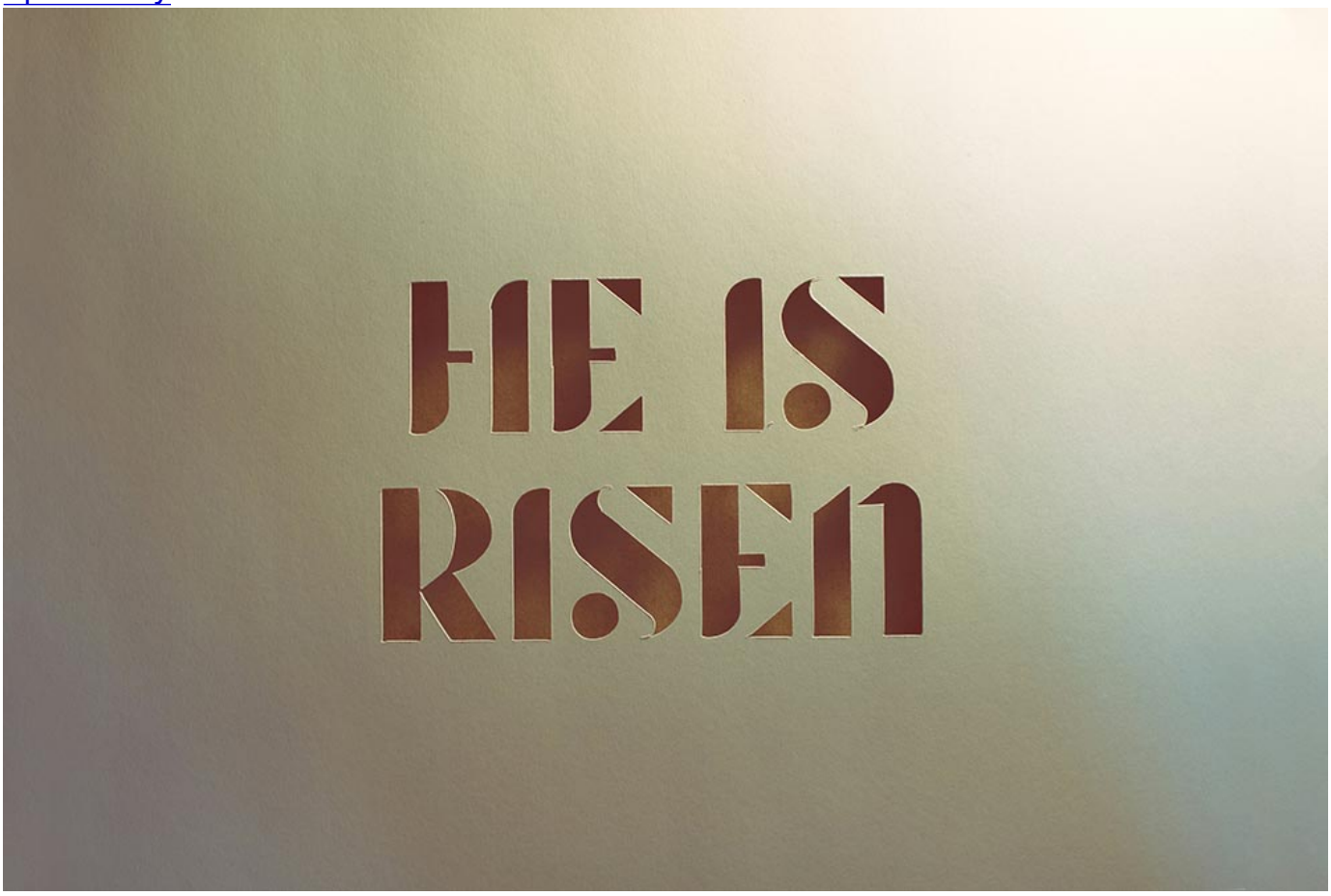
Columns
Spirituality



Unsplash/Kelly Sikkema



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"Don't cry for me when I die; rejoice, for I have lived my whole life for that one moment of death, when I know I will be in the bosom of God the father."

These were words often repeated by my father to us five siblings and to my mother. I was deeply attached to my parents. Leaving home to join the convent was thus a significant personal struggle. Fortunately, my convent was not far from home. However, when I offered to go up to the Himalayas to serve in our ashram there, my parents missed me too, and they came up to see me.

Years later, the turmoil began again when I had to go abroad for an international experience and an intense period of religious studies and formation called probation before making my final vows. My unconscious self played every trick to avoid going abroad, fearing the loss of a parent while far away.

Finally, I was given an ultimatum: go abroad for my probation or leave the congregation. Grace prevailed, and I went. After an exhilarating and very enjoyable international experience in Europe, where I was able to visit London, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, France, Venice and Assisi, I finally settled in Rome on Feb. 13, 1993, to begin my probation at Villa Lante, our convent there.

On Feb. 19, early in the morning, I got news that my father had crossed over to the other side. I looked out of the window and saw the rising sun/Son with my earthly father smiling at me, reminding me that he was now in God the father. This profound experience of the risen Christ has stayed with me ever since.

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Since childhood, I grew up with the belief that Christ has saved all of us once and for all. Living out the Gospel values and becoming the voice and feet of Jesus has always been difficult for me. But every time I see the rising sun, I find the courage to pick myself up again and forge ahead with faith and love.

In October 2017, I was diagnosed with third stage cancer. Faced with imminent death, I experienced immense inner joy, realizing that the end was near. Having learned that God has a purpose and a plan for everything, I fully surrendered to his holy will, desiring to live a Christ-centered life as a true disciple in my final days, and to soon be in the presence of the father.

After 22 chemotherapies and 15 radiations, I am alive to this day! Cancer has been my greatest spiritual gift and life has now become a cakewalk for me, as I came to realize that God is the doer. I now see my life as free of tension and stress, as I take the first step and God does the rest.

Because of this, the power of God is certain for me today. I have experienced the paschal mystery in my flesh, helping me to understand that we are an Easter people and alleluia is our song. I marvel at the wonder of Christ's resurrection, our union with Christ and the completeness of God's plan. Risen with Christ, we are invited to shout it from the rooftops because we now share this new life in Christ, with all our past erased and our sins forgiven.

With the empty tomb strengthening our faith, I now feel graced with renewed energy and enthusiasm to live this new life more authentically. Every day, I strive to reclaim my freedom to care, dare and take risks, as Easter reminds me to listen to my own inner voice, the voices of unborn children, the pleas of the poor, the marginalized, the subtle voices of Mother Earth, the unspoken words of the elderly and the words of those in authority. During the Eucharistic celebration each morning, I remind myself to connect my inner world to my outer world to better understand the paschal mystery.



People gather to pray the rosary for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis April 24, 2025, at Rome's Basilica of St. Mary Major. (CNS/Pablo Esparza)

The days of Lent — 40 days and six Sundays — are a good opportunity and a wake-up call for me to slow down. I try to listen to my own restlessness and find my rest in God, becoming revitalized and creative. When I actively listen, I deeply connect with my own journey and, in the process, I see the presence of God amid my everyday, ordinary, simple life. The radical following of Christ invites me to break boundaries and reach out in love, accepting hardships along the way. To be free, I must shed attachments to material things and stability, which gives me more space, time and energy to discover myself and God. We are all interconnected, and when I am free, it becomes easier to connect with all God's creatures.

This Easter, I hope and pray that my heart be raised with Christ as I awaken to the fullness of life, setting out with concrete actions to discover his plans for me.