

# Spring: a time for renewal

AFTER what has seemed like a very long, cold and dark winter, spring is now finally in the air! Well, if you're in north west Europe that is; if you're in another part of the world, you may well have been lucky enough to be having much better weather in a totally different season altogether.

I really love spring. You see the birds starting to nest, you see the young spring lambs in the fields, you see and smell the wonderful spring flowers. After a long, cold and dull winter there is suddenly so much colour and life all around — literally springing to life.

Spring is also a time of cleaning. In England, as a child, I always seem to remember having to help my mum do the big

“Spring Clean”! We would go through the entire house, cleaning and dusting from top to bottom. All of the rubbish that we had accumulated over the year was taken to the dump and all the things we didn't need any more were given away. When we finished, it almost felt like we were living in a new house. The cleaning seemed to last for ages, much like our winter, but it was well worth the effort and persevering through.

Here in Europe, spring coincides with a very important event for us Christians: Easter. On Easter Sunday, Jesus was raised from the dead after having died on the cross on Good Friday. Those few days must have seemed like a very cold, dark and lonely time for his followers.

On that first Easter morning, when Jesus appeared to the women in the garden and then to his followers there was disbelief at first, but this quickly turned into joy and celebration! Jesus had come back from the dead and this is when the life of the Church began. Jesus' message of forgiveness, salvation and eternal life quickly spread around the world.

Jesus gave us all the gift of life and he takes away our sins so that we might live a new life in him. However, sometimes our lives can become cluttered and overcrowded, and we might feel we are going through a cold and dark time, just like this year's European winter.

But the miracle of Easter brings new life to us and gives us a chance for us to

clear away the clutter. All of our lives need a spring clean at some point, and we need to get rid of all the rubbish that we have accumulated over the year — the things that weigh us down. Easter is all about new life and growth. If we get rid of some of the rubbish that clutters our lives, and re-dedicate ourselves to our Lord and Saviour, then we will have room for new things to grow. As a result, we will feel refreshed and renewed.

There may be others around us who feel sad, lonely or isolated but the good news of Jesus is for all us. He can take our lives and transform them. Jesus really can breathe new life into us and this is something that we can truly celebrate and rejoice in.