

Remembering Christina Rossetti

On the 27th April, the Church of England remembers the Poet and Spiritual writer Christina Rossetti.

You might be wondering why we remember a poet in our prayers. We also remember artists, and musicians, and scientists and politicians, as well religious figures and the Saints of the Church who may be more well-known and let's say 'obvious'.

The Church remembers or commemorates people from all walks of life who have expressed their faith in many and various ways. I suppose it reminds us that we all have a part to play, whoever we are, wherever we are from. The Church is a great tapestry of faith and witness and whether we are poets or politicians we are called to live out our faith in our life and in our work.

Christina Rossetti was born in 1830 to a family of poets and writers and artists. She was educated at home, and was dictating stories to her mother before she could even put pen to paper. Her poetry dealt mainly with religious themes and has been a source of spiritual reflection for many. You probably know her poetry better than you think.

It was she who wrote *In the Bleak Midwinter*, the Christmas Carol and *Love came down at Christmas*. But she wrote much more besides which has helped people examine and explore their faith.

As we journey through this season of Eastertide, it seems appropriate to hear a poem by Christina Rossetti on the theme of Resurrection. *A Better Resurrection* beckons each one of us to respond personally to the news that Christ rose from the dead, and let him bring us to new life.

A Better Resurrection by Christina Rossetti

I have no wit, no words, no tears;

My heart within me like a stone

Is numb'd too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimm'd with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk:
Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall—the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perish'd thing;
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him, my King:
O Jesus, drink of me.

A prayer by Christina Rossetti.



O Lord in whom is our hope, remove far from us, we pray thee, empty hopes and presumptuous confidence. Make our hearts so right with thy most holy and loving heart, that hoping in thee we may do good; until that day when faith and hope shall be abolished by sight and possession, and love shall be all in all.