

Christ is risen, alleluia!
Indeed, He is truly risen, alleluia!

EASTER MESSAGE 2012

Dear sisters and brothers,

For centuries Christians have greeted each other with the affirmation of faith: “Christ is risen, alleluia! Indeed He is truly risen, alleluia!”

We celebrate the climax of the journey we have been on with Jesus, as he, led by the Holy Spirit, made his way through towns and villages on his way to Jerusalem and the Cross. Easter Sunday is the third day of the Easter Triduum which recalls the Lord’s death and glorious resurrection. Easter Sunday and the Easter Season is what Saint Athanasius called “The Great Sunday,” fifty days of rejoicing in memory of the resurrection of Jesus bringing into the present moment of our lives, its full significance and its saving effects.

Our joyful celebration does not mean that all of life’s “deaths” are automatically changed into situations of life. The fact of the resurrection does not change everything instantly, but at the heart of all that we experience Jesus is present. He is present in the blindness of not seeing and in the light of understanding. Through life’s joys and sorrows, our resurrected Lord reaches out to us to be with us. As we open our hearts to him, he opens our eyes and we see. He alone opens the door on Life.

The Good News is that Jesus is risen from the dead. New life has been promised us by God. New life has been won for us in Jesus, the Christ. Resurrected life is what awaits each one of us. Already begun for us in Baptism, the resurrection of Jesus contains and announces our future.

St. Paul expressed it this way: “You have been raised with Christ. Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.” (Col 3:1-4)

We need to live as people who know they are destined for eternal life. We are called to live lives of holiness and service, sharing in the very mission of Jesus. As Catholic Christians, we are sent to radiate the person and the love of Christ and proclaim and propose His Gospel to the world in which we live. To achieve this, we need to nourish our lives on the Word of God and be in communion with him through his Body and Blood which we become and make present.

God has chosen us to be his witnesses. St. Peter expressed it this way: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and God was with him. They put him to death, but God raised Him on the third day and allowed him to appear to us who were chosen by God as witnesses that he is the One ordained by God.” (cf Acts 10:38-42)

As his witnesses, we have been entrusted with the task of evangelizing the world in which we live. May we always be ready to share with others the hope that is in us (cf 1 Pt 3:15).

An Easter card which I received expressed it this way: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms His word, calms our fears, comforts our hearts, clarifies our vision and commissions our lives. May Easter renew our hope.

Easter blessings on you and yours. You will be remembered as I celebrate at the Cathedral the Paschal Vigil and Easter Sunday Mass. Alleluia! Christ is risen, Alleluia!

+Robert Harris
Bishop of Saint John