



Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Risen Christ,

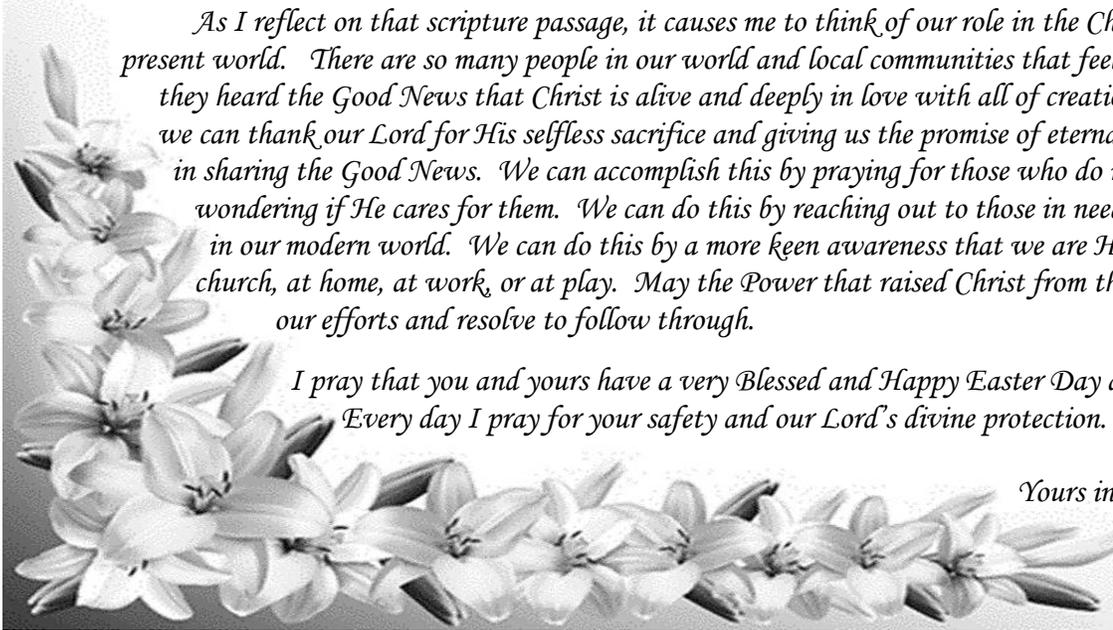
Happy Easter!!! The Lord is Risen!!! Alleluia!!! Alleluia!!!

After our time in the Lenten "desert", today we begin the heartfelt joy of the Easter Season. Our Lord has conquered the terror of death forever and given us all a share in His very Spirit. By His glorious resurrection, we are all given the pledge and promise of eternal life. All glory, praise and honor, Lord!

While every Easter Day and Season are joyful, this one is even more joyful. In so many ways our time of Lent feels like it's been an entire year rather than the usual forty days as we all faced the uncertainties of the pandemic. While it is not finished yet, our hearts are more hopeful and joyous than ever as the worst is behind us and much brighter days lie ahead. I remember last Easter finding myself missing our parish community terribly. None of us could have imagined a year like 2020. We all missed being together. But we survived. As more and more of us are getting vaccinated, we are once again increasing in number. Our celebrations, though joyous are still incomplete until every last one of us is able to gather around the altar of the Lord to be nourished with His body and blood that was shed for us on the cross. For those that must still be away, they are with us in spirit and deeply in our hearts.

As I reflect on the richness and beauty of the Scriptures this Easter Day, I find myself in complete amazement at how great our God truly is. It amazes me that God is so in love with the human race that He would ask His own Son to sacrifice Himself for us through the horror of crucifixion and the pain of death. How great our God is that He found us worthy of experiencing so great a love. How great our God is that His Son Jesus found us worthy to walk among humanity and show us the way to His Father.

On this Easter Day I think of the amazement in the hearts of the women who came to the tomb early in the morning on that historic day. How quickly their hearts filled with profound sorrow, would be changed into extreme elation and a renewed sense of wonder. I think of the amazement of His closest followers, the Eleven, who woke that morning feeling deeply saddened and crestfallen, thinking their hopes and dreams were gone and all hope lost. They, no doubt, sat in their shame feeling that they let their Master, Rabbi, and Teacher down, looking to their own needs rather than the needs of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. It would take the Good News brought by Mary Magdalene, that the tomb was empty and the Lord has been raised, to stir their hearts once again to hope and to share the exuberant joy of the women.



As I reflect on that scripture passage, it causes me to think of our role in the Christ resurrected in our present world. There are so many people in our world and local communities that feel like the Eleven before they heard the Good News that Christ is alive and deeply in love with all of creation. Perhaps the best way we can thank our Lord for His selfless sacrifice and giving us the promise of eternal life is by doing our part in sharing the Good News. We can accomplish this by praying for those who do not know Christ or those wondering if He cares for them. We can do this by reaching out to those in need and being His witnesses in our modern world. We can do this by a more keen awareness that we are His disciples whether in church, at home, at work, or at play. May the Power that raised Christ from the dead strengthen us in our efforts and resolve to follow through.

*I pray that you and yours have a very Blessed and Happy Easter Day and Easter Season!!
Every day I pray for your safety and our Lord's divine protection. Please keep me in yours.*

Yours in the Risen Christ,

Fr. Peter