



## Easter Message 2021

*“Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing choirs of angels! Exult, all creation around God’s throne! Jesus Christ, our King is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation!”*

This great proclamation of joy begins our Easter Vigil celebration - truly, an occasion to rejoice! Over the past year many have grown weary, but the joy of the resurrection reminds us that Jesus has won the victory. Truly, he is risen! This is indeed good news!

As we enter this holiest of weeks I do so with great anticipation of being able to share in these liturgies with the faithful. Last year was a year like no other. Indeed, we never expected that we would be unable to celebrate the Easter liturgies with the physical presence of the faithful. Liturgies are meant to be celebrated as a community of faith around the table of the Word and Eucharist, and the knowledge that we are now able to do so in person brings me great joy.

Just as Sunday is the highlight of our week, Holy Week is the highlight of our liturgical year, especially the Easter Triduum. These three days form a unity which reveals the unfolding of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. Jesus came to destroy death and restore life, and through his death and resurrection he brought us new life and gave perfect glory to his heavenly Father.

In these days of uncertainty, the Church continues to proclaim with great jubilation the apostles’ message that Jesus, the crucified one, is risen from the dead and remains with his people. After a year of pandemic, we need to be reminded of this hope, to pull us out of our weariness. The Lord is truly alive, he is with us in our difficulties, and each one of us can believe personally that Jesus Christ came to conquer sin and death. He came to shine a light in our darkness, to give us hope, and to restore us to new life.

As we contemplate the gift of family during this Year Amoris Laetitia Family, we are aware that Jesus, who shared in family life with Mary and Joseph, shares too in our family life, especially those moments when we come together in faith. In living these holiest days of the Easter Triduum may we be particularly attentive to the domestic Church, helping and supporting each other towards a renewed encounter with the risen Jesus.

Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “In the sacrament of the altar, the Lord meets us, men and women created in God’s image and likeness (cf. Genesis 1:27) and becomes our companion along the way.” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, #2). As we celebrate our victory with Christ, I invite you to renew your commitment to Sunday Mass – the little Easter. It is in this encounter with the risen Lord that our fears and anxieties give way to joy, just as they did for the first witnesses of the resurrection. We experience God truly alive and with us – we are not alone.

“Today, as pilgrims in search of hope, we cling to you, Risen Jesus. We turn our backs on death and open our hearts to you, for you are Life itself.” (Pope Francis, Easter Vigil 2020). May the light of Christ shine brightly in each of us, so that by our witness others will come to know that the Lord has truly risen from the dead. May we encounter the risen Jesus in a personal way this Easter, and find in him the fullness of joy, peace, and life itself.

With great hope in the joy of the resurrection, I remain faithfully yours in Jesus with Mary,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Riesbeck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

✠ Christian Riesbeck, CC  
Bishop of Saint John  
March 29, 2021