



Now indeed is the time to proclaim the profound *hope of the Resurrection* — at a time when we need it most! It is in the darkness that Christ lights the fire of God’s love. The new Paschal Candle, the most significant candle in the Church, that which has existed from its beginning, is lit for the first time on the Easter Vigil after the sun sets. And the Church becomes alive with that light, the light of God’s love for each of us!

Alleluia! Christ is Risen, He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

I want to extend wishes for a beautiful and happy Easter to all parishioners, staff, and visitors who have gathered here at St. Mary and St. John Churches to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I also share these wishes with those who cannot be with us. We have now entered into the great season of Eastertide. May we all celebrate with great joy *and hope* in the promise of our *new life* in Christ, our Risen Lord!

This is my 7th Easter here. As I reflected back on the Easter words I have shared with St. Mary and St. John Parishes over the years I felt the need to focus on hope, ***the gift of Hope*** we have been blessed with in the Resurrection. We have experienced many losses in the past year beginning with *no open Easter Masses*. Now, this Easter 2021 we are welcoming back more of the faithful, and especially those who need the Church more than ever, who need that Hope that we are promised. With great anticipation I look forward to the time when *all* can join us again.

I warmly welcome and congratulate **LeAnna Garbula, Jenna Hall, Scott Hanson, Morris (Moe) Hill, and Jacob Lewis**, members of our collaborative who entered fully into the Roman Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. What a great joy and privilege it has been walking with these catechumens and candidates this past year. I thank each of you too for welcoming them into our blessed communities of faith. I know that you will continue to support these men and women on their journey of faith. In the coming months we will also be celebrating those who will receive the Sacraments of First Holy Communion locally and Confirmation at the Diocese.

In closing, I am incredibly grateful for all those who have been able and willing this past year to support our parish communities in celebrating the Holy Mass and receiving the Precious Body of Christ safely, reverently, and beautifully, whether in our churches or remotely.

May the Promised Hope of our Risen Lord be with You All,

*In His love,
Fr. Craig*