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



One can only imagine the joy, the peace, the reassurance, the Apostles experienced when, from behind closed doors, the Risen Lord appeared; witnessing to them, and through them to the world, the reality of His resurrection and the promise of life everlasting. Death had given way to life; the grief of the grave to the joy of the empty tomb; sorrow and separation disappeared in the moment of recognition: “We have seen the Lord! He is risen! Alleluia!”

The faith of the first Christian community was born out of their direct experience of the reality of Jesus’ resurrection. From that very real experience, the Church has told and retold the story of Christ’s triumph over the powers of sin and death – not just to recall a unique event in the life of the world but to give continual witness to the power of the Risen Lord in the life of every Christian, indeed in the life of the world.

Over the past two years our world has struggled with the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, with all its variants and mutations. This Easter, the world faces yet another challenge – the struggle with the evil of war; a war of imperialistic aggression waged against an innocent people by a ruthless maniacal autocrat. A struggle seen so many times before in our history: a battle between good and evil; a battle between truth and lies; a battle between freedom and tyranny. Into this reality, the Christian Church is called to witness the love of God in the face of the Cross, and the triumph of Christ’s Resurrection.

It is precisely in these times in which we live that the strength of our faith in Christ crucified and risen holds the most meaning. The Apostles had placed all their hopes on Jesus that He was indeed the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Those hopes seemed dashed in the darkness of Calvary. The Passion, Death and Burial of Jesus, their Lord and Master, fractured their faith. But death did not have the final word; evil had not triumphed; the tomb could not hold Jesus. Sin, violence, hatred, and death were overcome by the power of God’s redeeming love.

During the fifty days of Easter, and in the days beyond, we will celebrate as people of faith. Faith in God, faith in His saving grace, faith that righteousness will prevail even in the face of evil. And in the conditions of our present world, with war and violence, pandemic, economic uncertainty, the shattering of so many innocent lives, it is all the more important that we live our Christian lives with faith, hope, and love. Witnessing to our faith in acts of charity, in acts of compassion, with messages of peace, and in the firm belief that “neither tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or peril, or sword; nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:35,38-39)

As we rejoice in the blessings of Easter, we know our journey of faith is not yet complete. We have more trials, challenges, difficulties, and struggles to encounter and overcome; but we do so in the knowledge that we are not alone. The Cross stands before us; the Risen Christ ever with us. As the Apostles went forth from that upper room to witness to the world the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, let us also go forth in the love and strength of God.

May all of us be blessed this Easter Season with new life, new hope, and a sure and lively faith. Holding to the promises of Jesus: “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

May I extend to you all my blessing and prayers for a joyous Eastertide.

*+Shane*

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