



April 16, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the whole Church rejoices with shouts of joy and praise, I happily extend to you my prayers for the true peace and happiness that comes from our celebration of Jesus' Resurrection.

This is an Easter unlike any other. Everywhere people are being overwhelmed by a world that is changing more quickly than they can comprehend. They are experiencing economic insecurity and political and social unrest. Traditions, teachings and values that once undergirded society now have a tenuous claim on our lives, while a constantly evolving technology often fragments our lives and numbs us to the tragedies around us.

Understandably, for many people the celebration of Easter, with its joyous festivities and emphasis on new life, seems at odds with the daily struggles they face.

Thank God we have a Saviour who knows our hardships first-hand and shoulders our burdens. Jesus knows the hardships oppressing us because he has suffered and continues to suffer with us in our crises.

Because Jesus is risen from the dead, he can remain with us. He even accompanies us through the dark valley of death, opening us to hope in eternal life. His hands uphold us. Wherever we may fall, we will always fall into his hands. At the door of death, where no one can accompany us further, even there he is waiting for us.

During my recent *ad limina* visit to Rome, the Holy Father reminded the Bishops of the Canadian West and North that we must accompany people, just as Jesus did. We must share the struggles of our people, not only listening to their cares, but journeying with them – those within our flock as well as those outside.

In accompanying all who are burdened, we must comfort them and assure them that Christ's Resurrection points the way to genuine hope.

In the words of Pope Francis, "Let us not stay imprisoned within ourselves, but let us break open our sealed tombs to the Lord so that he may enter and grant us life. Let us give him the stones of our rancour and the boulders of our past, those heavy burdens of our weaknesses and falls. Christ wants to come and take us by the hand to bring us out of our anguish."

May the Lord free us from the trap of being Christians without hope, of those who live as if the Lord had not risen from the dead, as if our problems were the centre of our lives!

This Easter, I offer my assurance to you that the Church is listening and is committed to working with you, through our Archdiocesan priorities, through the upcoming Synod of Bishops on Youth, and through the everyday pastoral ministry of our parishes and schools.

The power of Jesus' Resurrection becomes real in us when, with his help, we make our own lives sources of light and life for others; when our words heal and encourage; when our hearts are alive with compassion; when we stand firm for the dignity of life and against injustice.



Archdiocese of Vancouver

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Christ has conquered evil fully and finally, but it is still up to us to embrace this victory in our lives. This victory of his must shine through our hearts so that we can rejoice with Mary that the Lord is truly risen. Alleluia!

With cordial greetings and the assurance of my prayers for you and your family during this Easter season, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Michael Miller, CSB  
Archbishop of Vancouver