



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Easter 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Christ,

*This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad, Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Saint Paul tells us that *In Christ Jesus you are a new creation!* Today we know with the mind of faith and feel in our hearts filled with joy how true that is and whence comes this wondrous and unique gift. It is God's gift that shows the boundless love He has for us when *in the fullness of time He sent His Son, born of a woman.* Without the obedient love of the Son who became one like us in all things but sin, we could never have been saved in the extraordinary way that in fact we are saved. We have been saved *by one like us.* That means that all we are and all that we experience on this earth has been embraced by Jesus, the God-Man. He alone could save us as Son of God. He alone, as fully human as we all are, could transform us, with whom He shares our humanity, by offering us the way to share in His divinity.

Nailed to the cross, He overcame that ancient curse of universal death. For His death became the passage way that destroys death and opens the path to eternal life for us and for all humankind. Now He breaks the bonds of death by breaking forth from the tomb in His glorified state. Now the angels can say to the first apostles, *Why look among the dead for one who is living? He is not here among the dead! He has risen as He said!*

Nicodemus once asked Jesus *How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?* No, Nicodemus, that is true. But Jesus has made the Holy Sepulchre His tomb to be the womb from which He comes forth to the glorified state that He shares with us. We who have entered into the font of Baptism and emerged from the waters of Baptism are His new creation sharing the life of the One Who today we truly proclaim God's Son, the Victor over sin and death, the Savior of all humankind.

As His new creation, Paul rightly calls us *Ambassadors of Christ.* In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, on this Easter Day as we rejoice, I would like to call us all to re-commit ourselves to being **Ministers of Reconciliation** in our families and our communities but especially in our Church and in our nation. Too many members of our Church engage in polemic and seek to divide us as if bishops are persecutors of the laity or consecrated women and men are at odds with priests and pastors. These attitudes and these divisions deny the new creation the Risen Christ has given us. Our nation has sunk into a new low in public discourse when political leaders and pressure groups ridicule and label one another or accuse those who disagree with the prevailing forces as being "haters" and "phobic".

May all of us on Easter Sunday, in the presence of the Risen Christ, at Mass, in our homes and in our hearts, put aside those attitudes and commit ourselves to the ministry of reconciliation, eschewing the tawdry and the degrading, and re-affirming the respect and dignity of all, for **HE** came to be the Savior of all Humankind and today in our hearts and in our world, we proclaim

*JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN AND HE IS LORD FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN!*

Bishop of Rockville Centre