



April 20, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Easter Sunday finds us standing together at the empty tomb with Mary Magdalene and the other women, with Peter and John as we celebrate what our faith is all about: that God has restored the world, and each one of us, in the Resurrection of Jesus. Christ is risen and is with us in every step we walk, every breath that we take, every moment that we are alive. God touches us with His unfathomable love, giving us hope and reason for our Easter joy.

For Lent I invited you to join with me in offering up the traditional Lenten Spiritual Disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life within our own Diocese; for world peace, especially in the Ukraine and Gaza; for the victims and survivors of human trafficking; for distressed migrants and refugees in our country and throughout the world, or for your own worthy charitable intentions. Please continue praying for these intentions, especially during this Easter Season. We should also add to our list of intentions the earthquake victims in Myanmar and Thailand, as well as those affected by the tornadoes and flooding in our own country.

The empty tomb is the sign of the authentic hope that Christ makes all things possible, that we can make of our lives what God wants them to be. That is particularly important during this Jubilee Year of Hope. Pope Francis reminds us: “The death and resurrection of Jesus is the heart of our faith and the basis of our hope.... Christ died, was buried, was raised and appeared. For our sake, Jesus experienced the drama of death. The Father’s love raised him in the power of the Spirit, and made of his humanity the first fruits of our eternal salvation. Christian hope consists precisely in this: that in facing death, which appears to be the end of everything, we have the certainty that, thanks to the grace of Christ imparted to us in Baptism, ‘life is changed, not ended,’ (Roman Missal, Preface I for the Dead) forever. Buried with Christ in Baptism, we receive in his resurrection the gift of a new life that breaks down the walls of death, making it a passage to eternity. (n.20)”¹

Pope Francis writes that Mary gives us a great example of hope. “At the foot of the cross, she witnessed the passion and death of Jesus, her innocent son. Overwhelmed with grief, she nonetheless renewed her “fiat”, never abandoning her hope and trust in God. In this way, Mary cooperated for our sake in the fulfilment of all that her Son had foretold...the Mother of God comes to our aid, sustains us and encourages us to persevere in hope and trust. (n.24)”²

The victory of Jesus over death itself, even during our most challenging days, empowers us to live our lives in the hope that there will be a resurrection at the end of our own journey. Be assured of my continued prayers and please remember me in yours. May these Easter days be a time of renewed joy and hope for you and your families. Happy Easter!

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg

¹ Francis, “Spes Non Confundit,” Vatican, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html (accessed April 4, 2025).

² Francis, “Spes Non Confundit,” Vatican, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html (accessed April 4, 2025).