



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have come to the end of our long Lenten retreat and the joyful song of “Alleluia!” returns to our lips. The journey of these last forty days has come to its end, yet our journey continues, not only into the feasting of these next fifty days of Easter, but for the rest of our earthly life as we see how Jesus’ Death and Resurrection have opened for all of humanity a new and definitive horizon. Last year, our Holy Father Francis reminded us, “Today is Easter, the Pasch, a word that means “passage”, for in Jesus the decisive passage of humanity has been made: the passage from death to life, from sin to grace, from fear to confidence, from desolation to communion (*Urbi et orbi*, 2023).” Truly, through our Lenten fast, we sought to grow in our relationship with Jesus and be renewed in our communion with one another, finding in Him the grace to be brothers and sisters in the family of the Church.

At the beginning of Lent, I prayed that as “we go together into the desert of Lent ... [we might] leave behind whatever enslaves us and open our hearts to renewed freedom in Jesus Christ (Lenten Message 2024).” For some of us, the journey was fruitful, and we have grown more into the “*glorious freedom of the children of God* (Romans 8:21).” Others of us have struggled in our path toward liberty. Wherever we find ourselves, the Risen Lord continues to strengthen us, and the Church continues to encourage us. Like the ancient Israelites fleeing the slavery of Egypt, we can expect that our journey will have its tests and trials. And, with them, we can sing the song of freedom knowing that such a gift comes not from what we conspire to do, but by the mighty hand of God, “*I will sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant! ... My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my savior* (Exodus 15:1-2).”

Rereading the story of the Exodus in these past holy days, we see the providential hand of God guiding the Church in its earliest form as a pilgrim people, providing food for the journey and grace to continue on. When they finally entered the Promised Land, they were not at the end but at the beginning, the inauguration of their new life with God and with one another. So it is with us on this glorious Easter day! With gratitude for all that the Lord has accomplished for us and in us through Christ Jesus, we begin to fashion our new life in Him and to do the work of the redeemed now.

While the Solemnity of Pentecost culminates our Easter celebrations, the Church invites us to embrace the truth that the Holy Spirit has already been “*poured out into our hearts* (Romans 5:5)” Because of this, we are called to get to work in spreading not only the news of Christ Risen from the dead, but the fruits of so great a victory. We do this by bringing light to those who are suffering because of the indignities of war and civil unrest, bringing liberty to those held captive by addictions, bringing consolation to those whose grief weighs them down, and bringing joy to those saddened by the heaviness of daily life. When the Easter victory of Christ sets us free, we are compelled to bring that gift to everyone we meet. In this way, as we continue our journey, every person we encounter will be able to see Christ alive in us and in all that we do.

Let us continue to pray for each other as we celebrate these joyful Easter days.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior  
Bishop of Harrisburg