

## **Bishop Vincent's Easter Message 2025**

Dear sisters and brothers,

The Resurrection isn't simply something we look forward to in the afterlife! The Resurrection of Christ affects us right now, existentially and fundamentally.

This is what happened at our Baptism. We didn't simply go into the water to express our intent to die to sin and then come out of the water to express our intent to try to live a new life anchored in Christ. There's more to it than that.

Jesus didn't die a peaceful death in his sleep. His body was subject to torture and humiliation in the last hours of his life. On the cross, he was naked, beaten, tormented and completely broken. But in death, Jesus underwent a total transformation. On Good Friday he was a wreck, and on Easter Sunday his broken body was transfigured. As St Paul puts it, "the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality".

The crucifixion, death and glorious Resurrection of Jesus teach us that our human existence is not simply extended. It is transformed by virtue of our being made one with him. Christ emerged from the tomb with a transformed, human, risen life. We emerged from our Baptism with a participation in the same life Christ received when he rose from the dead.

This is the only life Christ has, and it is this life that he gives to us: his transformed, human, and risen life.

Think about it. This is the life that is nourished within us at every Eucharist. At the Eucharist we join with Christ in his dying and rising. At Communion we come forward and sacramentally unite with the Risen Christ. What we celebrate at Easter then is too big to be put into mere words. That's why the main Easter celebration - the Easter Vigil - is full of symbols: darkness, light, fire, the Easter Candle, water, oil, Baptisms, Confirmations, Alleluia's, music everywhere.

That's why we have all those readings that tell the core stories of Creation, Abraham, the Exodus, and the prophets... And to really appreciate what we celebrate at Easter time, let's never forget to think of the real people who have died: our parents, grandparents, children, loved ones, victims of war and violence.

As we ponder and pray about our loved ones gone before us 'marked with the sign of faith', we take in all these symbols, and the full realisation comes over us, "They're alive, really living. They're with God. They're with us in a living bond, and a love that still runs back and



forth between us.” And somewhere deep down inside us we say, “I really believe this. I know it to be true.”

Of course, we can only dare to believe in such a great mystery - because of our hope in Jesus of Nazareth.

Perhaps that is why Pope Francis calls us in this Jubilee year of 2025 to deepen our hope. He wants us to become people of hope and encourage our fellow pilgrims on the journey of faith.

That's not so easy at times! For so many in our chaotic world of 2025 – especially marginalised communities – life seems so hopeless, unjust and unfair. And our beautiful planet is being hopelessly damaged by those who put greed, self-interest and personal ambition before God.

But take heart! Christ by his dying on the cross and his rising to a transformed human life, has opened the door of hope, and shown the way for us all. Let us live the hope of the Resurrection here and now as we journey towards its fulfilment in God's Kingdom.

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Wishing you and your families a blessed and holy Easter.

**Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv**

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