



Bishop Joe's 2026 Easter Message

Easter arrives this year at a time when, for many, our world feels weary and unsettled. Across nations we witness continuing conflict, displacement, and deep anxiety about the future. Closer to home, many families within our own communities are carrying heavy burdens: the rising cost of living, housing pressures, work insecurity, the emotional toll of recovery after natural disasters, and the quiet strain on relationships that comes when hope feels thin. Into this reality, the followers of Jesus, dare to proclaim the most extraordinary truth: *Christ is risen*.

The Resurrection does not deny the pain of Good Friday; it passes through it. The empty tomb stands as God's decisive response to violence, despair, and fear. It reassures us that suffering and death do not have the final word - love does. The risen Jesus still bears the wounds of the cross, reminding us that God's victory is never distant from human brokenness, rather it is marked by compassion and solidarity.

For families under pressure, Easter speaks gently but powerfully. It assures parents who worry late into the night, grandparents concerned for the future of their grandchildren, and young people unsure of their place in the world: you are not alone. The Lord who rose at dawn walks with you in the ordinary struggles of daily life - at kitchen tables, in workplaces, in schools, and in moments of exhaustion or uncertainty. Resurrection hope is not an escape from reality; it is the strength to endure, to begin again, and to believe that tomorrow can be different.

At this Easter time, we hold in prayer all who suffer amid conflict, especially the people of Gaza, Ukraine, Iran, and other troubled places. We remember families weighed down by fear, loss, instability, and violence. These harsh realities call us to deeper compassion and solidarity, and such compassion is itself a living sign of Easter resurrection. Whenever violence gives way to peace, vengeance to forgiveness, lies to truth, and hatred yields to love, Easter is already at work among us. Every act of kindness, every effort to protect the vulnerable, every gesture of reconciliation is a small resurrection - a stone rolled away from the tomb.

Easter invites us to look for hope not as an abstract ideal, but as a living presence. Christ goes before us, even when the path is uncertain. As we celebrate his victory over death, may our hearts be renewed with courage, our families strengthened in love, and our communities committed to being places where hope can rise again.

Christ is risen. Truly he is risen.