



Catholic Diocese of Victoria

Office of the Bishop

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Dear sisters and brothers,

Easter greetings and Christ's peace to all.

In the accounts of the Risen Christ in sacred scripture, Jesus' first words to the astonished and fearful disciples hiding in the upper room are "Peace be with you".

These few words of the Lord, repeated in every Mass we celebrate, are at the heart of the healing ministry of Jesus. "Peace be with you" is the source of the hopes and longing of the world, and in particular the peoples living the pain and grief of what Pope Francis has called "a third world war fought piecemeal".

Raging violence once again seems to be the only tool in our human toolbox to create a secure peace; what a tragic and horrific cross of suffering for millions of God's children. Indeed, for the families in our midst who are broken-hearted and anxious on a multitude of levels with grief, loss, and diminishment, peace seems elusive.

So, is the gift of peace from the Risen Christ real, or even possible?

For the first disciples to encounter the Risen Lord, the answer is a resounding Yes! In the Easter season, we will hear their testimony in scriptural accounts of the transformational grace of the Risen Christ's gift of His own peace to Mary Magdalene, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, doubting Thomas, Peter and Paul, and his mother Mary, to name a few. And down through the ages, those words of encounter with the risen Christ – "Peace be with you" – have transformed millions.

In our own times, Christ's words "Peace be with you" enliven the men and women of dialogue and hope in the midst of the great and polarizing tribulations of our time. And Jesus's words of peace give hope to people of God in our Diocese, in the crosses and tribulations we experience personally and around us.

This Easter season, may we all hear and accept the words of Christ: "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you*" (Jn 14:27). Let the hope of our faith in the Risen Christ ignite our hearts to "go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life".

In the peace of Christ, Happy Easter.

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria

