



Catholic Diocese of Victoria Office of the Bishop

4044 Nelthorpe Street, Victoria BC V8X 2A1 – Tel: (250) 479-1331 – Fax: (250) 479-5423 – Web: rcdvictoria.org

March 24, 2016

Dear Friends in Christ,

This Jubilee Year of Mercy that we daily live in small acts of compassion and tenderness, and great acts of forgiveness, reconciliation, and justice, find their source and summit in the Easter mysteries we celebrate.

Jesus Christ, in his suffering, death, and resurrection, demonstrates in his own flesh both the cost and the glory of Mercy. Mercy is essential for conversion, restorative justice, and integral ecology to renew the face of the earth and restore what has been lost through sin.

We could say that the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane indicates the gravity and urgency for conversion of hearts and minds to an ‘integral ecology’ (*Laudato Si’* #137) for all who dwell in this garden, Earth. In particular, the conversion of hearts to care for the plight of millions whose homes and lives are threatened, which includes mass migration of people to safer places, challenges the human family to new ways of integration and solidarity. These ‘new ways’ test the moral and ethical fabric of cultures, tribes and societies around the world and here at home.

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, the joy of our Easter celebrations encourages us to profound hope in Jesus, the Merciful Risen Saviour. Jesus gives us this real hope in our own encounters and acts of mercy. We have seen and experienced the face of mercy in the faces of refugees coming to our communities; we have also seen the face of mercy in those who welcome these wandering strangers. We know the hope and mercy that Jesus gives because He has gone before us; we know his hope and mercy because we, too, have wandered in despair, and he has welcomed us. In gratitude we follow him, placing our feet firmly in his footsteps, following the trail of hope he has already broken through the most desperate and desolate landscapes of war-torn earth and broken hearts.

Let mercy be our path and our way to renewed Easter hope and to dynamic actions of justice. Jesus speaks the word *peace* in solidarity and communion to the grief-stricken, anguished women at the tomb. This is not merely a word, but is an all-encompassing activity in which we all participate every time *hope* and *mercy* move us to *encounter* and to *communion*, which conquer indifference, fear, and even death itself.

Jesus is alive! He is risen, and in him, so are we. All creation rises at this new dawn to life in the love of his grace. From the Garden of Gethsemane to the earthly garden we call home, Jesus’s own life has been poured out so that there may be a new heaven and a new earth. May this Easter renew us and stir in us a passion for mercy, for a new hope on the face of the earth.

Grace, blessings and peace be with you this Easter.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria

“Jesus is alive! He is risen, and in him, so are we. All creation rises at this new dawn to life in the love of his grace.”

~ Bishop Gary Gordon