



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

## 2017 Easter Message

Easter is with us again. Alleluia!! In the wonderful and great solemn liturgies that the Church celebrates to mark Christ's gift of redemption and new life to the world, we hear once again the stories that are proclaimed very year about the death of Jesus by crucifixion and his subsequent resurrection from the dead.

What I find wondrous about the Word of God, especially in these stories, is that even though they are very familiar to us, we receive them as something fresh, something new, something that is able to address us now in the current reality in which we live. As the Word addresses our present lived reality, it brings to us extraordinary and real hope.

What is our current reality today? I think a lot of people are suffering precisely from a lack of hope. I'm witnessing, especially among many of our young people, an anxiety, sometimes a real depression, and that's reflective sometimes of a hardship that is also being experienced at home. Perhaps that's no surprise, given the fluctuations in our economy, political instability throughout the world, the difficulties people are having in their relationships, and so on.

So there is a felt need for something to hold onto, something secure, a real foundation that will give a reason for real hope. And that's precisely the message of Easter!

Jesus is the Son of God. He became human for us. He took upon himself the reality of our human nature. When he suffered his passion and died by crucifixion, he took to himself all the evil forces in the world, and by his resurrection destroyed their power. He showed that the love of God is able to vanquish all.

As I like to tell our young people, especially in their own moments of difficulty, if Jesus can rise from the dead, there is nothing from which he cannot rescue us.

Jesus alone is the reason for our hope. When we turn to him in faith, we discover his presence, and we discover in him the steadfast love of God, of God who remains with us

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always as he promised, of God who will never, ever let us down. That's the reason for our hope – the fidelity of God made known in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Let us cling to that. Let us find in Jesus the Risen Lord the real reason for hope, the sure foundation for our lives, and let us rejoice in the love and peace that flows from His presence and from His mercy.

A blessed and happy Easter to all of you.

✠Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton