



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

Easter 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today we celebrate the most important moment in the history of the world. It is the day on which a promise was kept, even though it had to follow a tragic and unjust death.

Today we celebrate the moment when a mother's love was vindicated and consecrated by God Himself. Today we see the Virgin who witnessed the torture and death of her innocent lamb, and who cradled His lifeless body in her exhausted yet upraised arms as she bathed His wounds with her tears. Today we see, through the grief borne by that Most Blessed Mother, the breathlessness not of one who has died in grief but one who is breathless from amazement and an overwhelming joy. The promise has been kept! Even as He said it would all be fulfilled: the Passion, Death and, yes, without fail, the Resurrection from the dead, it is true, it is true! "Magnificat anima mea Dominum!" "My soul glorifies the Lord:4!" (*Luke1:46*)

As is recorded in the Gospel of Saint Luke, after the Angel Gabriel announced to her that she would bear a Son who would be "God with us," Mary burst into, as it were, a hymn of praise to God. Stunned at first, and then realizing God's presence before and within her very being, this most favored one couldn't contain the profound joy she felt, knowing that God's promise was being fulfilled and she was part of its fulfillment!

But wait! The Divine Child was born and now, "God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God" was brought to the Temple, to Simeon, to be presented to God in thanksgiving. What a great joy, only to be tempered by Simeon's prophecy: "This child shall be the rise and downfall of many. And your own heart a sword shall pierce." (*Luke2:35,35*) What mother has not experienced heartbreak, small or great or even unspeakable sorrow at times, caring for their child's best interests? Oh, Blessed Lady, Mother of God, wrap your mantle of grace around those who are most in need of your comforting presence.

Is it any wonder that I recall this loving, sorrowing mother's fidelity to God and trust in His wisdom for my Easter Message this year? We have been witnesses to countless suffering mothers both locally and through news broadcasts from around the world and certainly, in our own families. Would that we could wipe away the tears; tears that are painful yet sweet medals of honor, Purple Hearts of the wounded.

"But I will call this to mind as my reason to have hope: that the favors of the Lord are never exhausted and His mercies never run out; they are renewed each morning, so great is His faithfulness." (*Lament3:21-23*) Today we stand with Her who faced the greatest sorrow and we are not deprived of her greatest joy: He is Risen! The Most Blessed Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ and, yes, our Blessed Mother through Him, wraps her mantle of grace around the shoulders of

the Church and of the whole world for all time as she says again, “My soul magnifies the Lord!” “The Almighty has done great things for me and holy is His name.”

There is a light that shines from within; its brightness comes from the Risen Son of Mary. He imparts it, He blesses it, He radiates it! Our Blessed Mother radiates it as she is embraced again by her Son. This fullness of life, the promise that He kept, is the Resurrection to eternal life, the promise fulfilled. This is our Faith and the reason for being God’s family as the Church.

May this be the cause of our Easter joy so that the light of faith will be burning brightly. May this be the foundation of Easter celebration: “Sing praise to the Lord, you faithful; give thanks to God’s holy name. For divine anger lasts for a moment; divine favor lasts for a lifetime. At night time weeping enters in, but with the dawn, rejoicing.” (*Psalm 30:5,6*)

In the company of Our Blessed Mother let us always remember that the promise of Life and the overturning of death is fulfilled! This holy promise is kept and is ever shining before us.

A Blessed Easter to you, to your loved ones, those who are with us and those who have fallen asleep in the hope of the Resurrection. May the glory of the Lord last forever.

A Blessed Easter to you and to all the world. Alleluia – Praise God!

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Libasci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.  
Bishop of Manchester