



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"Christ is Risen!" The world turns on this fundamental truth that changes everything and that explains who we are and where we are headed: "Christ, yesterday, today and forever!" On Easter Sunday the Church exults in the joyful proclamation that He is truly risen from the dead. God gave His Son to be the sacrifice that takes away our sins, and has raised Him up as the victor over sin and death, so together we cry out: **Alleluia!**

The first words of the Risen Lord to his terrified and downcast disciples were: "Peace be with you." (Luke 24:36) Their first thought was that the ghost of the one they had abandoned at his Passion had returned for retribution. Far from it! On the Cross Jesus had said of all those involved: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) Christ died for the forgiveness of sins, including yours and mine, because "God so loved the world."

Over the past year we have dealt with a worldwide pandemic. Many have felt isolated, helpless, and at times have fallen into discouragement and even despair, but today on this Easter Sunday we have cause to **Rejoice** for Christ is Risen from the dead ... He has conquered every illness and even death itself. In a world filled with doubts and darkness, where bitter division appears to be getting the best of us, where, out of indifference to faith and worship, so many people are faced with inner spiritual and moral destitution, we have a duty to proclaim from the rooftops: **"Christ is Risen."** He alone is the answer to the deepest longings of the human heart. He is the only Way, the only Truth and the only Life. As he told us: "No one comes to the Father except through me."

Our mission in 2021 and always is to make the Gospel credible to others by loving God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves, inspired by the countless acts of selfless service we have witnessed this past year from our health workers, neighbors, families, friends and clergy. In times like these people of faith and character really shine. If we take to heart the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter and partake of the Holy Eucharist worthily, then we will do the same.

The Easter candle is lit as a symbol of the Risen Christ. Our light has dawned inextinguishable and hope is restored. Just as it was for the disciples, today we too are reborn as we celebrate **"Christ has Risen!!"**

May the Risen Lord be with you always and grant you the peace and joy that only He can give.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Leonard P. Blair

**Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford**

