



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Easter 2025

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In his letter announcing the Jubilee of Hope, Pope Francis stated the following, “Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring” (*Spes Non Confundit* -Hope does not disappoint).

As we consider the world at this present moment, there are serious concerns regarding what the future may bring. Fear of the future can disturb our peace and rob us of hope.

“Be not afraid” (Matthew 28:10). These were the first words spoken by Jesus on Easter morning. This simple phrase was addressed to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary because they were overwhelmed by the empty tomb. Jesus wanted to restore their hope by helping them to overcome their fear.

St. John reminds us that “there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1John 4:18). When these two women met the Risen Lord, they encountered “perfect love”. Their fear vanished and their hope was restored because Jesus was alive!

Our celebration of Easter can help us to overcome our fear. When we allow ‘perfect love’ to transform our hearts we become pilgrims of hope. The most perfect place for this to happen is at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass where we commemorate and celebrate the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Here the Risen Lord will come to us in word and sacrament. We will be encouraged to listen and to ‘taste and see the goodness of our God’. Our hardened hearts will be pierced by perfect love. All fear will be vanquished by a profound hope for the future.

This year I invite you to come to Easter Sunday Mass as ‘pilgrims of hope’. Let us invite others to join us as we encounter the Risen Lord who will remind us that hope does not disappoint. “Be not afraid”.

May God bless you with joy and hope this Easter.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Diocese of St. Catharines