

Easter 2023 message from Bishop John Michael Botean

"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!" (Psalm 118:24)

Despite the exuberance of this verse, which we sing over and over again in our celebration of Easter, you might well ask how anyone can rejoice at all over anything, the world being what it is. From climate change to war, from pandemics to politics, our very existence as a species feels as if it were nothing more than one colossal mistake, a global problem with no solution in sight, a ticking time-bomb with none to defuse it. Individually, death is ever at our door, waiting for its moment to break in and crash our private party.

If it weren't for the resurrection of Jesus, indeed joy would be impossible.

But Christ *is* risen, and humanity is awakened from its dark nightmare to the bright morning of His empty tomb. We would not dare hope but for the faith that is our hope's foundation: that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16). In Jesus, we encounter the man Who is God, whose death on the cross was the stake in the heart of death itself, and whose resurrection puts the lie to our despair.

"And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith" (1 John 5:5). God has given us His Spirit so that we might believe, "and through believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). So it is faith that gives rise to our hope, and hope that gives us the possibility of living a life of unconditional, Christlike love—that is, a life in which we claim for ourselves the resurrection offered to us by our Father through His Son.

May your celebration of Easter this year implant this faith firmly in your heart and in the hearts of your family and loved ones. It is there you will find the joy that is awaiting you.

Christ is risen! He is truly, genuinely, amazingly risen indeed!