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MOST REVEREND
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2018 EASTER MESSAGE

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

On this Easter Sunday, may the abiding peace of the Risen Savior be with you, your families and loved ones. May Christ's peace fill our hearts and homes with His love and renew our unity of purpose and good will.

Easter celebrates the core belief of our faith, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. "*Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen...*" (Luke 24:34) Our Lenten journey of repentance, sacrifice and prayerful preparation has brought us to this glorious moment of Easter not as one event in our lives, but as the example of how we live anew every day. The Holy Spirit calls each of us to experience the glory of His resurrection and the fullness of new life it gives us.

In the first moments of Easter Vigil, as symbolized by the lighting of the Paschal candle, fire is blessed and its radiant flames overcome the darkness. The Risen Christ illuminates our world with the power of God's love. Sin and death have been defeated and "Christ our Light" leads us out of the darkness to a new day. Enlightened by God's redeeming Word, we witness the celebration of the Baptism and Confirmation of those who receive the Sacraments of Initiation. We are strengthened by God's life in us through the renewal of the Baptismal commitment to follow Jesus. We embrace His Risen life.

The power of Jesus' Resurrection and of Easter joy lives in all who seek to be free from sin, in all who strive to be liberated from injustice and in all who yearn to be released from the grip of selfishness and pride. The power of Jesus' Resurrection lives in all who believe in a forgiving, merciful God whose love for us is unyielding. It is that power of the Resurrection that we must share in living as God's people.

The message of the empty tomb is not death but new life, not despair but hope, not defeat but victory. Death shall not have the final word. Easter proclaims new life, the fullness of God's love and a way to begin again. Jesus is the way. In Jesus, we experience the living Presence of God and His gift of new life. When we receive and share Jesus' gift, our whole outlook is changed. This is the victory that Easter bestows on us so that we may see the image of the Risen Jesus in one another. In our words and deeds, we must show others that Jesus is alive in us.

As we walk with Christ in newness of life, we give glory to God. Easter celebrates the great truth that we are forever made new through Jesus' Resurrection. Selfishness, indifference, pettiness and sin pass away, and in their place, God's love fills our hearts. When we forgive those who wrong us, or when we love and show respect for those who disrespect us, or when we reach out to the alienated and the lonely, care for the sick, give food and clothing to the needy, and visit the confined, the Light of Christ shines through us. God's merciful love is channeled through our kindness, respect, compassion, understanding, and, most of all, our love for others.

May the joy of Jesus' victory fill us with hope, strengthen us, and bring us peace.

Happy and Holy Easter! Alleluia!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop of Norwich