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### Easter Message 2024

To be published in the Easter Sunday Bulletin or read at all Masses on March 30-31, 2024.

My dear brothers & sisters in the Lord,

The peace of the risen Lord be with you and all whom you love. On this Easter Sunday, we rejoice in the Lord's victory over sin and death. Assembled with their companions, the Eleven apostles first heard the good news of Jesus' Resurrection. While they were discussing all this, Jesus stands among them. In their fright, in their guilt, and in their wonderment and awe, the Risen Lord greets them, "Peace be with you!" (cf. Luke 24:36-37)

While the mere sight of Jesus would easily recall their guilt, His presence and His greeting of peace changed all of that. They heard his greeting: "Peace be with you!" They did not need an explanation. They knew exactly what Jesus meant. All is forgiven! Why are you so upset? (cf. Luke 24:38) In that moment, His disciples passed from death to life; they went from the sin and despair of betrayal and denial to the joy and hope of the victory of new life that Jesus shared with them. Through the Church, Jesus continues to share that joy with us. In His Risen Presence, the Lord greets us with His peace and we rejoice in His gift of new life.

At times we betray, deny, and turn away from the Lord but in the same way that Jesus greets His disciples on the day of His Resurrection, He reaches out to us. He embraces us with His love. He touches our hearts with His peace. Just as that short but powerful greeting of peace bestowed new life on His disciples, Christ's peace embraces us with mercy and forgiveness. His peace gives us a rebirth to new life. It shares with us the power of the Resurrection to begin living in a new way. The old way of living—of selfishness, indifference, pettiness, and sin—passes away and in its place, God's love fills our hearts.

On this Easter Sunday, Jesus stands before us and He greets us with His Peace. The power of sin and death is destroyed. His greeting is as much a sign of His Resurrection and His desire to share His life with us today as it was when He first appeared to His disciples and spoke that greeting to them. How can we fail to rejoice and to celebrate His Resurrection? How can we not return to the Lord and share in His victory? In the light of faith, we celebrate the Eucharist on Easter and we renew our belief that Jesus is Risen. Through the power of the Spirit, Jesus abides with us today and every day.

Easter celebrates the great truth that we are forever changed, forever made new through Jesus' Resurrection. With full heart, we renew our Baptismal commitment to serve God faithfully and live as faithful witnesses to Our Lord Jesus Christ. As we renew our commitment to the Lord, Jesus embraces us with His love and changes our hearts with His gift of peace.

Peace be with you! Happy Easter!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop of Norwich