**BISHOP NOËL SIMARD’S**

**EASTER MESSAGE 2018**

**HE IS ALIVE! AMEN! ALLELUIA!**

Easter, God’s Spring! This great feast of Easter, which is at the heart of our Christian faith, is linked to the idea of passage, of liberation, of a new beginning. Recalling the Jewish feast of Passover, when the people of Israel were freed from slavery in Egypt, our Christian Easter celebrates the passage from death to life by Christ, the victory of the Risen Christ over the slavery of sin and death. Yes, Christ is risen, He lives! Amen! Alleluia!

Here is the Good News which has crossed time and space and having been announced to all like John, Peter, Mary Magdalen, the disciples of Emmaus and the eleven gathered in the cenacle, attests that the crucified Jesus is really the resurrected Good Shepherd. This Good News, this joyous news of the Risen Christ has been proclaimed by all the faithful believers of our Christian communities for the last 125 years of our existence as a diocese. They have carried the flame of faith and passed it on with conviction, audacity and the missionary spirit.

In one of his sermons (362) Saint Augustine affirmed that during our eternal life, “every action of ours will be Amen and Alleluia. Amen signifies ‘It is true’ and Alleluia means ‘Praise God’ (…)” Christ is alive! Amen! It is true! This is what we are told in the revealed Word and the witness of millions of believers in Jesus. Christ is alive, it’s true, because He lives in all those who dare to have faith, who dare to Live. He lives in all those men and women who find the strength to stand up. He lives in all those who go forth to the frontiers of suffering, the frontiers of itinerancy, of migrants and of social outcasts.

Christ is risen and draws us to His way of life. He is risen so that the cry of all our brothers and sisters who suffer is heard, so that the disfigured faces of thousands of miserable people will not remain invisible.

Yes, Christ is risen! He lives in those who support our parish mutual aid committees, our food banks, the international solidarity organizations, the welcoming committees for immigrants and refugees. He lives in all those young people who are fighting injustice, corruption, the deterioration of our environment and who are demanding justice and a mutual sharing.

He lives and His life is expressed and continues to resound, not only in the beautiful churches of our fields and valleys, but also and especially in our living stones, our baptized fascinated by Jesus and His message of the Beatitudes.

ALLELUIA! Praise God! Praise Him, because today the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts of so many men and women, who in their everyday life follow Jesus and witness to His life and His love. Praise God for the heritage of faith that we have received and which is the promise of the future, as long as we continue to transmit it and allow it to bear fruit. Praise God! Let us go forth joyful and singing the Pascal Alleluia, faithful to our commitment to the world and looking toward the future.

**HAPPY EASTER!**

† Noël, your Bishop