

MESSAGE FROM + NOËL SIMARD, BISHOP OF VALLEYFIELD, FOR EASTER 2021

HE IS NO LONGER IN THE TOMB, HE HAS RISEN, ALLELUIA!

Jesus is alive! He is no longer in the tomb that contained him. This is the Good News that Mary Magdalene will announce to the disciples after having met the Lord outside the tomb. For the past year, the pandemic has forced us to remain confined, to live isolated in our homes, to face uncertainty and anxiety. It has been a year of restrictions, cancellations, frustrations, illness and death. Our churches remained closed much of the time and we suffered in silence from the lack of the Eucharist and of human and community relationships. It has been a difficult year not only for us believers, but for our country and for the whole world, especially for those who have lost loved ones, jobs, businesses, homes. It is as if we have been living in a tomb, deprived of light and human contact. Even if the pandemic is not over, we can see and feel a glimpse of hope with the vaccine, the easing of certain measures, a greater possibility of welcome in our places of worship and, of course, the return of spring.

If Christ has risen and is no longer in the tomb, we too must "come out of the tomb" and see the signs of Christ's life and presence in the difficult context that is ours. The Lord has been present and continues to be alive in all those who have provided health care or essential services with compassion and great generosity, in all those who have created happiness through their acts of mutual aid, sharing and consolation. He is alive in all those leaders who work to build our common home by basing it on solidarity, universal brotherhood, justice, equality between men and women and love; and by fighting against indifference, racism, domestic violence, injustice and misery. He is alive in all those who find the strength to stand up again or who go to the frontiers of distress, homelessness and misery to bring support and hope.

Christ is risen and draws us on the path of life. Despite the shadows and the economic and social difficulties caused by the pandemic, may the light of Easter shine on our faces and drive out our fears! May the life of the Risen One be a source of renewal for our civil and Christian communities! In this year dedicated to St. Joseph and also to the family - Joy of Love - may St. Joseph watch over our Church and our country! May we also work together to put the family at the heart of society and of the Church so that it may remain a fundamental pillar of love, union, forgiveness and life!

To all of you, may Easter be radiant with the joy, peace and life of the Risen One and filled with His blessings!

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