

Easter 2019

## Christ Shows us the Way

“Christ our Light” - “Thanks be to God”. These are the first words proclaimed at the beginning of the Easter Vigil Mass in every Catholic church throughout the world. In darkness, the large Easter candle is carried through the church, until everyone stands with a lighted candle in their hand, as the Easter proclamation is sung. These moments are solemn and joyful at the same time. The lighted candle reminds us of our baptism and how Christ lights the way for us in our life.. The message given is one of hope and of new life, and the message is for all of humankind. Christ is risen. Christ has conquered death and we in turn will rise with Him to new life and glory for He is our light!

This message has been proclaimed for over two thousand years in our churches and in our homes. Yet we see that even though the message is of good news, filled with hope and joy, there seems to be little hope and joy in our world today. Even when Jesus walked on this earth, there was little hope and joy surrounding him and his disciples. So how important is this message of Easter for us today?

If there is one thing that Jesus brings to us in our everyday lives, it is a message of hope and compassion, with our eyes fixed on future glory. Easter is about this for each of us, and even though our lives may be complicated and difficult to manage, the message of Easter is that Jesus will never abandon us, but will accompany us on our journey to assist us especially in difficult times. We have all heard of the story of the “Footprints in the Sand”, and we know that the Lord does carry us, when it is too difficult for us to carry on. However, for this to happen, we must know Jesus in our lives.

The Lenten season gave us an opportunity to deepen our relationship with the Lord through prayer, fasting and outreach to the poor. Easter is the celebration of that intimate relationship we have with Jesus and the challenge to carry on this bond in our everyday lives. Now we are busy people, and some might say this is not easy to do. But our link to Jesus is sustained in the simplest of ways. The ideal way is in Mass and Holy Communion, but a simple prayer each morning seeking the Lord’s grace and guidance is enough. Can our Easter message be a message that brings us closer to the Lord on Easter Sunday and into the year?

May the Risen Lord bless all our parishes this year. May He give grace to all our priests and ministers, as they work in His name. May our hearts always recognize our obligation to help those in need, and may the joy of Easter bless our families, our children and our friends with an inner happiness and hope that will last us the entire year long. This is my prayer for you. A Happy and Holy Easter to all!

Bishop Fred Colli  
Bishop of Thunder Bay