
INVITATION TO JOY



When a hockey team wins a championship, when a golfer hits a good score, when one wins a sports or cultural competition or a political race., there is much jubilation, and everyone gathers round the hero: a real party!

“EXULTET!”

On Saturday, March 30, in all the churches we could hear the traditional hymn, the beautiful *Exultet*, a hymn which calls us to deep and overflowing joy:

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!
Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour, radiant in the brightness of your King!
The power of this holy night shines on the Church,
And enlightens the world.

And the people exclaimed, lifting high their lighted candles:

Christ our light!
Thanks be to God!

A DEEP JOY

I want to wish to each and everyone of you a deep and real joy. May this Easter season help us follow Christ along the road of the Resurrection. “The days of the passion are over, follow now the footsteps of the Risen One; follow him henceforth to his Kingdom, into his everlasting joy.” Thus the Church urges us at the Easter Vigil. It seems to me that in the year 2001-2002, during which we heard so much of war and terrorism, it is good to hear and internalise the Church’s Easter message. May the Risen Jesus truly be the joy of humankind!

FIFTY DAYS

Throughout the fifty days of the Easter season, right up to the feast of Pentecost, we shall experience through the liturgy the profound emotions of the first Christians and the first Christian communities. The risen One will be encountered by the Apostles, by Mary Magdalen, by the disciples at Emmaus. Christian communities will begin to develop through their receiving the Holy Spirit.

EASTER 2002

My deepest prayer is that the joy of the Risen One be at the heart of your lives, and that this joy be as deeply-felt as it was by Mary Magdalen and the Apostles. This does not mean that there will never be any doubting and difficulties. However, knowing that the Living Jesus accompanies us, makes the journey lighter. And Jesus the risen One continues his work in the midst of our communities by sending his Spirit. The Lenten season was a favourable time for us to deepen our faith; may the season of Easter help us discover what is happening in our lives because of the resurrection of Jesus. "Jesus our brother is risen from the dead. He has risen free and victorious, taken our destiny into his own in order to fill it with his light." [Liturgy of the Hours [French]] Through the resurrection of his Son God has already given us a new birth; may He always bring us back to the memory of this joy which nothing, not even death can take away!

TIME OF TRUST

From among the many Easter texts which raised my spirit, I came across this one, by France Descôteaux. "My dear little lamb, you are so precious to me! I would leave everything for you! Your security and welfare are my constant concern. Do not doubt your importance to me. You know, now and always, how I love you and want you. Come, let me take you in my arms and comfort you. Tell me about your day, about your worries, share your happiness, your suffering, and your hopes with me. You seem so fragile!... Still, I know that you have what it takes to carry out what you need to do... Do you know why I have called you? Do you have any idea of all the good you can do in the name of the Love of your God?... Come, my child, little lamb I love so much, I have found you and will protect you for as long as you will let me."

May the Joy and Peace of Jesus be with you always!

+ François Thibodeau

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Bishop of Edmundston

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