

## *The Joy of Easter is for All*

Jesus Christ is risen! Death no longer has any power over him. Risen and alive, Christ has entered into the fullness of God's own life.

The message of Easter is good news for all of us, and no one is excluded from the joy of this day. *For if God* has overcome the power of death through the resurrection of his Son, death no longer rules over our lives. *If God* has overcome the power of death through the resurrection of his Son, we can hope for the fullness of life that our risen Lord now enjoys. *If God* has overcome the power of death through the resurrection of his Son, we can live our lives in a new way—a way filled with life and joy.

The joy of Easter is for all of us today. The message of Easter is for all who believe in Jesus Christ: young and old alike. We dare not say that the joy of this day is not for us. We dare not say that we have no need for this new life, the eternal life, the fullness of life that Easter brings.

*If you are young*, the joy of Easter is for you because it assures you that Christ gives you the fullness of life, a life that no one else can give you. *If you are old and afraid of death*, the joy of Easter is for you because the resurrection of the Lord assures you that if we die in Christ our life is not ended. *If you are filled with anger and resentment today*, wondering why you are sitting in this church, the joy of Easter is especially for you because the resurrection of Christ has the power to

change our sorrow into joy, to transform our anger and resentment to love and peace. *And if you are already filled with joy and happiness today, so much the better because you have begun to understand the joy of Easter, a joy that will only increase as you grow into the mystery of Christ's resurrection.*

What we celebrate today—the Lord's resurrection—is a mystery. It is a mystery into which we must enter again and again; it is a mystery we will not understand until we have experienced the resurrection. And even then, we will not completely understand the mystery, because this mystery is the mystery of living in God's life.

Jesus Christ is risen and alive today, but not in the way he was before his death. Jesus did not return to his old way of life. He entered into a new life we will not understand until we have experience it ourselves. What has happened to Jesus will happen to those who are faithful to him. If we suffer with Christ, we will conquer with Christ. If we die with Christ, we will rise with Christ into God's own life, a life that will not end, a life that will not change, a life that will be forever new.

On this Easter Day I wish you a most blessed and joyful Easter, especially you who are hurt and saddened, alienated and angry this day. For this day is the day of joy and peace that only God can give. This day is the day that the Lord has made.