



Easter 2017

ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!!

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

These days, the human family appears to be in a struggle for inner peace and contentment as various worries often latch onto our minds and into our hearts. In a world darkened by sin, steeped in uncertainty, and saturated with suffering, it can be difficult for many of us to experience Easter joy.

The Easter Vigil liturgy begins with the faithful gathered in darkness. Into this darkness, a spark ignites the Easter fire, the source of light for the Paschal candle that will be held high as the procession enters the Church. In the face of this light, “Christ, our Light”, darkness has no option but to retreat.

The Gospel of John in its opening verses announces that in the Word “life came to be...and this life was the light of the human race” (1:4-5). The evangelist then continues that this “light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (1:5). The blessing of the new fire at Easter challenges you and me to be the spark that forces the darkness we encounter in our lives to retreat.

At this moment, it might seem like nothing’s changed in our world, but hopefully our Lenten pilgrimage has changed us. We have journeyed, sometimes faithfully, other times not so, in our resolve to follow Jesus more closely. It is His light, shining through us, that brings a newness to those we meet. Our love of God is evidenced in our earnest attempts to love our neighbor in more concrete ways, both the neighbor next door and the neighbor who lives at a distance.

“...for if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection” (6:5). Here, in his letter to the Romans that we hear at the Easter Vigil, Paul writes of our mission on this earth and tells of the fruits of such a journey of faith: union with Jesus on earth leads to union with Him in heaven...ah...there’s the hope, the source of our joy every day—Christ has risen! It’s that simple. It’s that difficult!

Christ-led, Christ-fed, and hope-filled, let each of us resolve to be the spark that lights the candle instead of cursing the darkness as we await a new Pentecost when fresh tongues of fire are loosed in the world. May the light of Christ, illuminating our lives, dispel the darkness. A very happy and Blessed Easter to you and your loved ones!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry R. LaValley".

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg