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**MOST REVEREND  
MICHAEL R. COTE, D.D.**

**Easter Message 2023**

My dear sisters and brothers in the Lord,

A truly blessed and happy Easter to you all!

The events leading up to Easter parallel our own lives. The Cross is ever present as we carry numerous daily burdens that, at times, cause us to fall under their weight. The victory of Jesus' Resurrection shows us that God shares our life, that He helps us to carry our burdens, and that He raises us up to the newness of life. The arms of Jesus' Cross stretch out to embrace us in His triumph over sin and death. Our failures, our suffering, our addictions, our sins all fade before the awesome power of Jesus' Cross – no longer a sign of death but one of victory and hope!

On Easter, we gather in our churches because we know the need for the Good News of God's love and mercy. It is Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection that we celebrate in the Eucharist. Here we enter into this mystery of our faith! Our celebration of Holy Mass awakens in us the Eucharistic presence of the Risen Lord as often as we celebrate it. We participate at Mass because we hunger for the new life that He alone can give—the pardon for our offences, the healing that comes from His love, and the nourishment that we need for the life that He shares with us so freely and abundantly.

In the Easter liturgy, in the Renewal of our Baptismal Promises, we reaffirm our commitment to reject sin and to serve God faithfully. The priest sprinkles the faithful with the newly blessed Easter Water recalling our Baptism when, by the grace of that Sacrament, God cleansed us of sin, filled us with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and gave us the dignity of His sons and daughters. On Easter, we renew our pledge to turn away from evil and to embrace the way, the truth, and the life God gives us in Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior.

The Renewal of our Baptismal Promises is much more than a ceremony – much more is required of us than that. The renewal is our pledge to live God's love faithfully in our daily lives. It is our promise that we shall not put aside the Easter message of Jesus' Resurrection. It is our commitment to live, to love, and to serve as Jesus did. We renew the grace of Baptism when we allow His merciful love to change our hearts and, when, in our words and deeds, we bring His love and peace to others.

Easter celebrates the great truth that we are forever changed, forever made new through the transformative power of the Resurrection. And so, we must begin the celebration of Easter by participating at Mass. The doors of our parish churches are open in welcome to all as we celebrate this great event of our faith as a community of believers. With the Father's love, I welcome you to Mass on Easter and I greet you with the peace of the Risen Christ. With faith and hope, we continue our prayers for peace, for an end to war, and for our servicemen and women serving throughout the world. We pray also for all those who suffer from violence and who long for peace and for a new life. This Easter, through the triumph won for us by the Lord, may everyone's hope for new life be fulfilled through us who continue to minister in Christ's name.

Together we celebrate Easter as a new beginning of our life in God and we rejoice in the radiance of that new dawn of this Easter day that will never again see darkness. Alleluia! Happy Easter!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop of Norwich