

2024 Easter Message

The Rt. Rev. Lawrence C. Provenzano, Bishop of Long Island
– March 28, 2024 –

Siblings in Christ,

As we move through these next three holy days, often called the Triduum in the church's tradition and we move into the celebration of Easter, I have been wondering what does the world actually think about what we're doing, our rituals, our prayers, our ceremonies and liturgies, the various kinds of readings, the use of light and dark, incense and water and bells, the Eucharist, the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ. I wonder what is the world actually thinking as they see us as the Christian community gathering for these liturgies?

It makes me think that in fact the message of Easter, the new life of Christ for the world is carried through all of these signs and symbols and actions and words, and gestures that the church has used for over two centuries pierces the actual pain and suffering and brokenness and death of the world.

There always seems to be some disconnect the church is focused on the Triduum and moving toward Easter day. The world outside the church, the majority of God's people look at us and wonder, how can we do this in the midst of war and homelessness and famine and disaster across the globe and in our cities?

My wondering and prayer has brought me to this, that we have a message of hope in Jesus Christ that we celebrate using all of these elements, not in some kind of superstitious gesture or some kind of make believe play, but in fact become the tools by which we engage all of the rest of humanity, saying to them as loudly as we can that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, that he put an end to death, and that what we experience in our human condition, what we experience around the world with all the pain, the war, the suffering, the homelessness, the brokenness that is a part of our life and society. That there is reality to the message of Jesus Christ, that it is tangible, it is incarnational, that we can grasp it and share it with our brothers and sisters. That nothing that we do are the empty gestures of holding up a Bible and

pretending that somehow we have faith to answer questions, but in fact, that the liturgies of the church, the gestures, the prayers, the words, the actions, the smells, the sounds, encourage people to come and experience in reality the good news of Jesus Christ. That in fact on Easter Day, he rose from the dead and put an end to death. And that as a people, we can be encouraged and supported, moved forward in our journey as Easter people understanding the message of Jesus Christ for the whole world, not just for those who worship, but for all of humanity, for everyone in the world, for all of God's people.

And so, my siblings in Christ, as we enter this Easter celebration, I ask you to share that good news with your brothers and sisters. That in fact be the tool, be the means by which people understand new life in Jesus Christ because of their encounter with you. Because if you've come and been part of our worship, if you've come and prayed together with God's people, carry that reality out into the world. Allow people to understand the good news of Jesus Christ that becomes tangible in your love, in your gesture, in your caring.

Yes, Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is truly risen.

Alleluia!