



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

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### Easter, 2023

My brothers and sisters in Christ, may God who raised Jesus from the dead bless, protect and guide you.

Easter is the great game-changer in history. Everything is relativized by Jesus' breaking the bonds of death and rising to a new life which illness and pain and death can no longer reach. All the wounds of his crucifixion, though still visible, are healed in his risen body. He has triumphed over them.

Out of the love that led him to endure the cross for our sake, the Lord shares his victory with us. Like him, we will face our share of troubles and grief but, also like him, we will triumph over them. The grace he sends us through the Holy Spirit from his risen body enables us to bear the weight of our crosses in this life until death releases us from them. Then, when the Lord returns in glory, as he promised, he will raise us up to that new life that he now enjoys in its fullness.

We should never despair. The Lord is near, especially when we are broken-hearted. He builds us up by giving himself to us in the Eucharist, which we must acknowledge as his true Body and Blood. He forgives our sins, especially our grave faults, in the Sacrament of Penance. He gives us spiritual companions who encourage and strengthen us. When in need, his help is only a prayer away. *Come to me, all you who are heavily burdened and I will refresh you*, Jesus said. And St. Peter, who knew well the Lord's compassion, tells us: *Cast all your cares on him because he cares for you*.

Rejoice, then, Christians and all men and women of good will! God has triumphed over sin and death through the death and resurrection of His Son. By our baptism we have been joined to the victorious Christ. We need not be afraid of what life throws at us. With the Lord at our side, we can handle it. Enjoy the beautiful Easter season and remember that the Lord, risen in glory, is with you always, until the end of the world.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Mark E. Brennan  
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston