



The United Church of Canada L'Eglise Unie du Canada



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EASTER PASTORAL LETTER for April 9, 2023

*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through
the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." -1 Peter 1:3*

Hallelujah! Jesus the Christ is Risen!

We celebrate today the **Hope** of new life in the resurrection story of Jesus. The Christian story does not end in the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus rather it continued in the empty tomb. The Empty Tomb is the victory won! The victory won is ours! But let us not fall prey into the thought that the empty tomb is about, "by and by there is a pie in the sky". As we grapple with the uncertainties of the times; keeping up with the changing cultural trend, sufferings in many levels of our lives and society, such as health concerns, the pandemic, economic, social, and, political dilemmas - the Empty Tomb promises that things are possible! And the possibility is embedded in the gift of Hope Easter brings.

We are an Easter people. While we go through the challenging times of life both in the personal and communal level we are not deterred because of the Hope of resurrection. Allow me to share a personal story and how the hope of resurrection has touched the life of my family in the Philippines. Last year, two beloved members of our family, my brother and brother-in-law, died within three months. And, at the start of this year a member of my family became seriously ill. My sister-in-law, who is like a sister to many of us, had to undergo four invasive surgeries. On the third surgery, the heart monitor flattened and twice she was revived. The illness and hospitalization prolonged for three months. Because of the soaring hospital bills members of my family have to sell their business which is the source of their livelihood and they have to start all over again. But every time I face-time with them, I see smiling faces, thumbs up while enduring trials, and, I see faith and hear spoken hope! Thanks be to God for the gift of Easter!

Let me reiterate, we are an Easter people! We may feel defeated at times but we are not without hope. We may not change the situation we are going through right now, but we have the gift of resurrection before us. Amidst doubt- faith is present, amidst fears- hope abides! And so, we sing the words from the book of 1 Peter 1:3, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."*

Happy and blessed Easter! May our lives be filled with the joy and hope of resurrection today and in every way!

In Hope and Peace,

Rev. Nancy Mojica-Fisher
President, First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council