



# Catholic Diocese of Victoria

*Office of the Bishop*

1-4044 Nelthorpe Street, Victoria, BC V8X 2A1 - Tel: 250-479-1331 - Fax: 250-479-5423 - Web: redvictoria.org

*Easter 2023*

Dear People of God,

Mary Magdalene was the first witness of the Resurrection of Jesus from the tomb. There, a fire of love was ignited, and a profound deliverance from the fear that sin and death itself had sown in the human heart. Encounter with the Risen Jesus and the message “He is risen” created a missionary impulse in Mary Magdalene, to run to the fearful disciples and announce her encounter with the Risen Lord.

She brought good news, which overcomes the slavery to fear that so often overwhelms and paralyzes, causing a self-referential wall of isolation or the seeking of power and control over the other. We need look no further than our own time to see the effects of such fear, when a colonizing war grips Ukraine and many other places, and the pursuit of ideologies of profit leads to the greed-induced destruction of God’s beautiful garden and the peoples of the planet. But this encounter with a love so great is God’s way of inviting the human family to move beyond its fearful self-absorbing destructions to a new freedom and healing.

In scriptural accounts of Jesus’ encounter with disciples after he rose from death, his first words are often “Do not be afraid” and “Peace be with you”. The encounter with the Risen Jesus ignites in each of us a fire of love and a pursuit of healing dialogue, which creates friendship with all on the journey of life together. In the joy of the Easter proclamation, hope is rekindled like the spring in the steps and the hearts of the disciples on the road to Emmaus: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (*Lk 24:32*)

The missionary impulse of dialogue and peace can renew the face of the Earth, leaving no one behind or alone. May our Easter celebration, and the healing presence of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, ignite in all of us a renewed commitment to justice and peace, and open our hearts to a love that conquers all fear.

Happy and Blessed Easter, Alleluia, Alleluia,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon  
Bishop of Victoria