



Diocese of Worcester
Office of the Bishop
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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On the first Easter Sunday, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, hurried to a newly-carved tomb to anoint the body of the Lord. In their concern before such a difficult task, they said to one another, "*Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?*" (Mark 16:3)

When they arrived, they found that the stone had already been moved, and they were greeted with the words, "*You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised.*" (Mark 16: 4-6) Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead! Through Him the tomb had become the fertile ground of life's victory over death, and our lives were changed forever by His resurrection.

How wonderful it is to hear the *good news* of the Lord's resurrection again on this Easter Sunday! How much we need this assurance and encouragement! For too many still live in the dark grave of fear, rejection, loneliness, sin and poverty. Too many still ask, as we sometimes ask, "Will we ever see the light again?" As we pass through life, the haunting question of the women is still often asked, "*Who will roll back the stone for us?*"

Easter proclaims that God will roll back the stone! For Easter is a day of hope reborn, of courage renewed and of faith restored. The foundation of this enduring hope and renewed faith is our deep conviction that Jesus is truly risen from the dead, and that He now reigns as the Lord of life, who will unite all of us with God. "*If Christ has not been raised,*" wrote St. Paul, "*then empty is our preaching.*" (I Corinthians 15:14)

At Easter, it is good for each of us, worried as we might be about our personal problems, as well as those of our nation and our world, to recall these truths, and to savor the great *mystery* that restores our courage and rekindles our hope. Easter is the proof that the discouragement we face in the world will give way to the bright promise of the Lord's victory over sin and death.

Hear the Easter proclamation with joy in your hearts this year! Let the *good news* roll the large stones of your burdens away, and allow the bright light of Christ's glorious victory to shine. For that victory invites us to share in the Lord's risen and everlasting life.

With every prayerful best wish for a Happy and Blessed Easter, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester