



ARCHBISHOP'S EASTER MESSAGE 2015

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

“Overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise!” These words from the Easter Preface express our hope as we gaze in awe at what God has done in raising Jesus from the dead, and what God is doing in our lives, in our Catholic community and in our world as we share in His victory!

The Great Fifty Days of Easter leading to Pentecost help us deepen our grasp of this world-transforming event, Jesus’ Resurrection. Like the women and men disciples in the gospel, we experience confusion mixed with “disbelieving joy” (Luke 24.41). It has been so since the Church’s beginning.

Mark's account of the discovery of the empty tomb, read at the Easter Vigil, describes the women disciples fleeing in amazement, not saying anything to anyone out of fear (Mark 16.8). Other scenes at that first Easter find the apostles cowering behind locked doors, afraid of being discovered as followers of Jesus of Nazareth (John 20.19).

We can identify with these men and women for we are uncertain about what to do when Pope Francis urges us to join in the “New Evangelization”, telling our family, friends, co-workers and classmates about Jesus. Often we don’t feel comfortable sharing our faith and at times we can’t find the words to do so.

This Easter, perhaps we can see within our timidity an opportunity to invite the Holy Spirit to give us a “holy boldness” (the words belong to our Holy Father, who borrowed them from St. Paul) to tell others about the “joy of the gospel” we experience in our faith encounters with Jesus.

I encourage you with a renewed spirit of confidence and enthusiasm to take part in new opportunities to learn the joy of evangelizing. Here are some exciting opportunities in our Archdiocese during April:

Father Christian Dionne, OMI, will give conferences in French on Luke as an evangelist for our time (*“Luc: un évangéliste pour notre temps”*) as part of the programming for local Catholic television, *Foi et télévision chrétienne* at St. Gabriel’s Church, Gloucester on Friday evening and Saturday, April 17-18 (info: Lise, 613-748-1337; www.foi-et-televisionchretienne.org).

On Friday evening and Saturday, April 24-25, Ottawa's "Mission of the Redeemer" will host the first *New Evangelization Summit* to help address the challenges of telling the Good News of Jesus today. The excellent line-up of speakers will be present in our Archdiocese at the Ottawa Conference Centre (200 Coventry Rd) but the conferences will be broadcast to 20 satellite venues across Canada and the United States! I encourage participation in this wonderful initiative as we seek approaches to sharing our faith (info: www.newevangelization.ca).

Our diocesan church community of believers is regularly blessed with new members each year at the Easter Vigil when men, women and adolescents receive the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Those reborn by baptism into union with the Risen Lord Jesus are known as "Neophytes" ("newly reborn"). In the Easter Season, I invite the Neophytes to come and celebrate the Eucharist with me at Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica—this year at the noon Mass on Sunday, April 19. Come and rejoice with them, their families and fellow parishioners!

After this long cold winter our spirits yearn for the warmth of spring. This is true, too, in the spiritual life. May the radiance of the glory of the Risen Lord shine in your hearts and grant you the consolation and joys of the eternal life we have begun to taste in this world even now.

Happy Easter! Blessed Eastertide!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Terrence Prendergast".

✠ Terrence Prendergast, S.J.
Archbishop of Ottawa