



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

Easter Message 2018

Dear Readers and People of Good Will:

In the face of the many tragedies we have experienced in recent years, months, weeks and days, I understand even more strongly the suffering and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ as an Icon of all human suffering. His holy face on Good Friday bears the stains of the blood of Abel, the first victim of a homicide. The scars of the crown of thorns resemble those of innocent victims of every kind of crime. The agony of every broken human heart is seen on the very face of God.

I write of this now, at Easter, because in the face of these many recent tragedies that we have witnessed, we have seen as well endless outpourings of sincere compassion. These tears and acts of human tenderness accompany, console, and reassure the grieving that their pain is not carried alone.

Such was the case, as well, at the foot of the Cross with Mary, the Mother of Jesus and Saint John and Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Joseph of Arimathea; grief was overwhelming, but compassion was not wanting. Even the soldier who witnessed the death of Jesus was overcome with emotion and blurted out, "Surely, this was an innocent man!"

It was that innocence that was the hallmark of Jesus' humanity and divinity; he is one like us in all things but sin. "When he was insulted, he did not counter with threats, but delivered himself up to the One who judges justly" (1 Peter 2:23). This is a holy passing-over that overcomes the illusory power of evil. This is the transforming power of the presence of God who raised up Jesus on the third day.

Easter's witness to hope, Easter's witness to faith, Easter's witness to a love that overcomes the power of evil is seen in the holy face of Jesus who overcame the power of death and shows humanity the way to life. May this Easter be a passing-over to a new beginning that transforms the face of sorrow into the face of God.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.
Bishop of Manchester