

### People of Hope

The Easter liturgy is full of joy as we celebrate the hope that is in us through the resurrection of Jesus. “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad. Alleluia!”

One of the Easter ceremonies that has special significance is the renewal of our baptismal promises. We light our candles from the Easter candle, the candle that represents “Christ our light”, Christ the light of the world, Christ who casts out the darkness of sin and death; Christ who brings new life, new creation to our world.

The season of Easter focuses on baptism and the effects of baptism. We are joined to Christ, called to be bearers of his light in our world, called to overcome the darkness of sin and evil by the kind of lives we live.

The readings at this time tell of the spread of the good news in the early church. The apostles were the early witnesses of the resurrection. But we are reminded that, through our baptism, we too are witnesses.

As Jesus told us, you don’t take a light and hide it away. You put it on a lampstand where it will give light to all around. (Matthew 5:15) We can’t afford to be embarrassed by our belief; we have to be ready to stand up for what we believe. As an old hymn reminded us, “We stand for God”, and it is around the cross that we hear his call. We have to be steadfast and strong in faith.

The hope that we have through our faith in Jesus’ victory over death is a gift we have to offer our world. We are witnesses to hope. “Always have your answer ready for people who ask you for the reason for the hope that you all have” (1 Peter 3:15).

Many people today have no hope. They have no faith and, without faith in Jesus, what is there to hope in? It’s not surprising that so many young people become depressed and turn to drugs. Our society has tried to live without God, and without God there is no hope for our world or for ourselves.

Christian hope is a virtue, an attitude to life, that empowers for action in the here and now. It lifts us up and sustains us. It gives us the courage to press on in love and service of our fellow men and women knowing that Christ died – and rose again – so that all mankind could share in his life and love forever.

We work to make the world a better place, to make Christ’s kingdom come, to bring his love for everyone into our families, towns and nations. And we do it in the confidence that good will win out in the end because of the Resurrection of Christ.