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symbolized  
by dawn  
and lilies

Easter, 1975

My dear Friends,

## EASTER...

Easter is symbolized by dawn and lilies.

Easter is given sacramental expression in the light of dawn and in the life of lilies.

Easter is real when we become Sacraments of its presence.

Jesus lives again, He easters in us, when men come home to themselves in our presence and when men dislike our absence because they find Hope when we are with them.

We shall become Easter people on that day when sunshine means more to us than a further acquisition of worldly possessions.

We shall become Easter people on that day when children of the world excite us at least as much as rulers.

... when we use our hearts to measure the worth of a human being

... when we are joyful because so many people are in love rather than because so many people are affluent.

We shall become Easter Christians when we learn to make music and poetry, to make love and peace, to make Jesus human and to make ourselves as human as He was.

May you and your families experience the true joy of Easter — today and forever.

With a blessing I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph L. Hogan, D. D.  
Bishop of Rochester

## PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

# Joyless Heralds of Good News?

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

A professor of public speaking once advised our seminary students: "Capture your audiences' attention with a title that is relevant, provocative and brief. This will guarantee attention for at least a few moments." In this spirit, I have chosen the caption for this column on the meaning of Easter. It is obviously a ridiculous contradiction designed as an attention-getter. Hopefully, you will read on for a few moments. For each of us can profit from the indictment that applies in some degree to all of us whose Easter faith needs some bolstering.



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The first witnesses of the empty tomb were reported as **running with haste** to deliver the Easter message. Surely, only a nimble step and a voice filled with excitement should accompany the bearers of such good news. I fear that our witnessing has often been joyless and our pace halting in our Easter proclamation. Yet our Baptism which first united us to the Risen Christ assigned us the same vocation as that of the first Apostles — to be witnesses to the mystery of Easter. And the liturgy of each day never allows us to forget this challenge, "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith — Christ has risen!"

And surely we cannot proclaim this mystery of faith if our faith is not visible in the joy of our proclamation. Easter leaves no room for joyless existence, for Christ's victory

assures us that life no longer holds insurmountable obstacles. Everything has become the raw material of redemption, of resurrection. In the middle of our inescapable sufferings and many deaths, our faith assures us that Christ the Conqueror is with us. Even the seeming finality of physical death has lost its sting and has been swallowed up in His Easter victory.

The Resurrection has promoted much theological discussion in recent years and occupied much attention of apologists for ages who sought to defend the truth on rational grounds against the endless objections of the opposition. I have personally found little in these writings that would inspire me to a greater Easter faith. But I have found great inspiration in the lives of those who give witness to its reality in their day-to-day personal proclamation of its continuing dimension of hope and joy despite the daily pain of the pilgrimage.

If people are to believe in Easter, they need to see its faith alive in us who bear Christ's name. The real test of our faith is not belief in what happened almost 2,000 years ago, or in what will happen after death — but in the measure in which we live the Resurrection now — the degree in which the power of the Risen Christ penetrates our daily lives.

This is the faith that should make us visible as Christians. We should be Sacraments of Easter in the midst of an unbelieving world. And this we are not if we limp along — leading frightened, anxious and constricted lives when we should be showing signs of our transformation into new men and

women — into a new creation.

To be an Easter people means to bear witness in joy that the time of peace has been established, that reconciliation has been won through Christ's victory, that the world has everything to gain by acceptance of the New Order established by the Risen Christ.

To be an Easter people means to shout to all who have ears to hear, that those who are casting their lot with the powers of greed, hatred, war, bigotry, and exploitation are allied with forces already defeated. For Christ has conquered them in His Victory.

The Easter challenge to our faith is summed up in this story told by a news reporter on the scene of the 1970 enactment of the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany: "The most thrilling and inspiring moment for me came in the last scene of the play. Mary Magdalen, who in real life had experienced the victory of Christ that resurrected her from her seeming hopelessness ran across the stage and shouted these ringing words:

"O would that I could send my voice throughout all the world — that mountains and rocks, heaven and earth, might give back their echo:

'Alleluia! He is risen!'"

Such a personal proclamation is Easter's best proof. May our lives echo the message. Go tell everyone you meet! "I am an Easter person and Alleluia is my song."