



*Diocese of Fall River*  
*Office of the Bishop*  
*Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.*

Bishop da Cunha's 2015 Easter Message

Dear Friends,

When I was growing up, I remember how important Holy Week was, especially Good Friday. It was not only a day of fasting and abstinence, but also a day of quiet, a day of prayer, reflection on the Lord's passion and death. We were not supposed to watch television or listen to music, but spend the day in prayer and reflection on the passion of Jesus. So it was indeed a different and special day. It seemed that, at least in our culture and our time, we gave more emphasis to Good Friday than to Easter Sunday.

Although Good Friday is a very important day in our Christian tradition and in our spirituality, Easter is truly the summit of our feasts and it cannot be second to any other liturgical celebration. We are Christians not because we believe in suffering and death, or Lent and Good Friday, but because Christ rose from the dead, and therefore we believe in life, love, and joy.

Easter is the mystery of God the Father rewarding Jesus for his sacrifice, suffering, and his obedience to all that the Father asked him to do. Easter is the proof of God's love for humanity and our assurance that God wants all of us to be raised up after our own death and to live with him forever.

*"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith."* (I Cor. 15:13). The celebration of Easter is our way of saying, professing, and celebrating the victory of good over evil, of grace over sin, and of life over death. It is a time for us to know and celebrate not only Christ's victory, but our own as well. We rise the moment we begin to climb out of whatever hole we are in, the minute we begin to get over whatever is holding us back.

Easter means the passage from the old to the new. It means a new beginning, leaving sin behind, and covering ourselves with the new grace of Christ. It means putting away the darkness of ignorance and putting on the light of his truth. Easter is when we are washed clean in the waters of baptism, our lives are renewed, and we are never the same again.

When Jesus conquered death in his body, he conquered it in ours. We are called to live a life of appreciation of the Resurrection of Jesus and of our own. Ultimately, it is the Resurrection that gives meaning to life. Life doesn't make sense unless we can make some sense out of death, and death does not make sense without the Resurrection.

As I celebrate my first Easter as the servant of God's people here in the Diocese of Fall River, my hope and prayer is that this Easter of 2015 will bring renewed hope to all of us, so that we may continue living and practicing our faith and rejoicing in the abiding presence of our loving God. Happy Easter! *Feliz Páscoa!*  
*!Felices Pascuas de Resurrección!*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.  
Bishop of Fall River