



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

**EASTER: TIME TO RENEW OUR HOPE**

Dear Friends,

At the beginning of one of the most important documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, we read:

“The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially of those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are also the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.” (Gaudium et Spes #1).

Our world is immersed in so many crises. At times, people might feel discouraged and lose hope for a better world or for a better future for their families. This is when we come together as a church, as people of faith, as followers of Christ, to bring the light of hope. As we proclaim with the Exsultet on Easter Vigil:

*“The sanctifying power of this night  
dispels wickedness, washes faults away,  
restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to mourners,  
drives out hatred, fosters concord, and brings down the mighty”.*

We must let the light of our faith and our hope shine in the midst of this darkness. We must not allow the prophets of doom to extinguish the light of our hope.

We read in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that, “The Holy Spirit...teaches us to pray in hope”. The Psalms teach us to fix our hope in God: “I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.” St. Paul prayed, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” (Romans 15:13)

We are all called to be a sign of hope. In a world influenced by materialism, hedonism and secularism, our presence, which is the presence of Jesus, is a light of hope for the world. Despite our frail humanity or perhaps because of it, the light of Christ shines more brightly. We are urged to show enthusiasm for our faith, to live by it, and share it with others. This is how we are healed. This is how we become instruments of the healing power of God to the world. This healing comes precisely through the wounds of the Crucified One whose sacrificial life we share. It is, to be sure, a paradoxical hope: Life through death, joy through suffering.

We read in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, “They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles’ wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint.” (Is. 40:31) Again, with St. Paul we say, ‘We have set our hope on the living God’. (1 Timothy 4:10) Yes, we are indeed saved by hope and live with hope.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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