



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

Mother Nature and Easter Joy

“Look at the birds in the sky ... learn from the way the wild flowers grow” (Mt. 6:26, 28).

When autumn arrives every year, we feel in the air and see all around us the changes taking place in nature. There is a festival of changing colors. Deep green turns into yellow, red, brown, and a few other shades in between. Then the leaves begin to fall and the trees lose their beauty. By late December, they are apparently lifeless. If we wonder why they lose their leaves, it is nature's way of protecting itself. The leaves fall to keep branches from breaking with the heavy snows of winter and also to protect the roots of the trees from freezing.

By now, we've gone through the short days and long nights of winter, but in the last few weeks we've seen our days getting longer and nights getting shorter. A few days ago, we celebrated the arrival of spring. Now, with spring here, we see new signs of life all around us. Grass will soon be turning green again; trees will soon be full of leaves; flowers will embellish our homes, lawns, sidewalks and parks everywhere. We know that the cold and darkness of winter is behind us. *“How varied are Your works, LORD! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures. Send forth Your spirit, they are created and You renew the face of the earth”* (Ps. 104:24, 30).

We need to learn a lesson from nature: *“This contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand onto us, since for the believer; to contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a paradoxical and silent voice”* (St. John Paul II, Catechesis). Like nature preparing for the winter, we too, begin our Lenten season with the process of dying. We received ashes on Ash Wednesday as a sign of our own willingness to let go as we journey toward Easter. We move from the ashes of penance and dying, from the ashes of sin and selfishness, to the glory of new life and hope at Easter.

When we celebrate Easter, we go through a renewal in our lives, just as nature does. So, when you see the signs of new life this spring, when you feel the warmth of the sun, when you see flowers blossoming and leaves growing on trees, remember that God is inviting us to renew our lives as well. He is inviting us to leave behind the old self and fill ourselves with new hope. He wants us to share in Christ's Resurrection, but in order to share this glory, we need to let go, to let what is sinful and evil in us die so that we can live a new life with Him forever. Christ is our light, and with His grace we can pass from darkness to light, from sin to grace, from death to life.

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.” “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:4, 5).

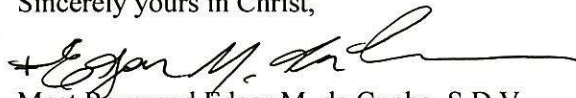
Indeed, even in the midst of what seems to be death and doom, darkness and ashes, life is just under the surface waiting to bloom, to blossom, to grow and bear fruit.

Jesus let go of His Godliness, emptied Himself, went through His darkness, suffering and dying, but God raised Him and brought Him back to life. If we hold to our faith and hope, God, our loving Father, will bring us also to a new life.

May the Lord Who rose victoriously from death, renew our faith and hope and fill us with joy and peace this Easter.

Happy Easter! *Feliz Páscoa! Feliz Pascua de Resurrección!*

Sincerely yours in Christ,



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