



April 5, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.*

These words of celebration are heard through our Responsorial Psalm on Easter Sunday, and they are words of great hope in the gift Christ gave us through his death and resurrection. When I reflect on the Paschal Triduum, I often find myself deeply humbled by Christ's great love for me, for us. On Good Friday, we recount the Lord's passion and death, and the reason for His suffering.

*Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,  
our sufferings that he endured,  
while we thought of him as stricken,  
as one smitten by God and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our offenses,  
crushed for our sins;  
upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,  
by his stripes we were healed.  
We had all gone astray like sheep,  
each following his own way;  
but the LORD laid upon him  
the guilt of us all.*

These words from Isaiah serve as a poignant reminder of what Christ accomplished through His death and resurrection. Christ did not just suffer and die to take away someone else's sins; He suffered this agony and He paid the price so all people could share in His everlasting life.

Throughout our lives, we experience times when things weigh heavily on us. Maybe it is a job situation, financial stresses, challenges throughout our world, or even relational problems in our families. We all experience these concerns and these worries. Biblically, we would say these are crosses we bear, some small and some larger.

The Easter message is that our Lord not only wants to carry those crosses with us, but He also wants to lighten our burden. Whatever our weakness, even death itself, has been overcome because of His sacrifice on Good Friday. The cross, which objectively is a sign of weakness and dishonor and death, has become an instrument of glory and new life. What we long for, what we were made for, is this new life, which is given to us through the Paschal Mystery. Whatever cross you are carrying, bring that to Christ, who will not only lighten your burden but transform your burden.

I pray that this Easter will bring all of us to the fullness of Christ's peace and joy. Christ is risen! Let us rejoice and be glad!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald W. Gainer".

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer  
Bishop of Harrisburg