

Bishop Bower's Easter Message 2026

The Joyful Anticipation of Easter

Each year, Christians eagerly await Easter, the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord. This sacred event marks the culmination of the Lenten journey and completes the Sacred Triduum. Easter signifies our transition from darkness to light, from sorrow to joy, and from the reality of sin to the boundless happiness found only in forgiveness through Christ Jesus.

However, not all Christians hold the same view on Easter. Recently, I received a postcard inviting people to an "Easter Celebration" at a local Christian church. The front of the postcard featured graphics, Easter eggs, confetti, a QR code, the church's name, and details about two Easter services.

On the reverse side of the card, there was a lot of text. It required careful reading to find the phrase "celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ" among descriptions of a "casual atmosphere," a statement that "We are a contemporary Christian church," and explanations about the two Easter egg hunts—one for each service. Most notably, there was an announcement of a prize drawing for a "kid's electric car & bike," including photos of the prizes and instructions for in-person registration.

While I pray that these efforts draw people into a sincere faith in Christ rather than merely into fun and prizes, I am concerned that the faith they develop may be superficial. This raises an important question: What does Easter truly represent?

First and foremost, Easter is the Christian Passover. Jesus is the Paschal Lamb who passed from death to life—not symbolically, but actually and physically. This supreme miracle is the paramount cosmic victory over both sin and death.

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Corinthians 15:14)

The Resurrection of Christ is closely connected to His crucifixion on Good Friday. Jesus' death provides forgiveness for our sins, and crucifixes in churches serve as reminders of this moment of salvation. This is known as the "Paschal Mystery", encompassing Christ's crucifixion, His three days in the tomb, and His resurrection. These events fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and gave us forgiveness, hope, and the certainty that we, too, will be raised from the dead.

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:23-24)

The dogma of the undivided Christian Church teaches that we will be resurrected from the dead, as proclaimed in the Nicene Creed: "I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

We are assured that we will be raised at the time of the final renewal of creation. This is not merely an escape from worldly troubles or an ascent to heaven in the clouds. It is the ultimate realization of God's Kingdom, where sin and death are destroyed, and we enjoy the ultimate relationship with the Holy Trinity through perfect love.

Easter celebrates both the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the anticipation of our own resurrection into the "life of the world to come." We achieve complete communion with God through the Blessed Sacrament of

the Altar, which strengthens us throughout our lives. By receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus, we become living tabernacles of grace that extend into the world.

Certainly, those whose understanding of Easter is focused on casual fun and raffle prizes might find our celebration quite intense. Indeed, our observance of the three days exceeds what our society can grasp. To them, it is just another time for family, food, and fun. But for us, it is a moment of immense joy because our Saviour lives and grants us ongoing hope in our own resurrection to live with Him.

Because of Easter, we acknowledge that our lives have significance and purpose. The total of our existence is not a slow journey to the grave in a hearse. Instead, the purpose of our being is revealed in the risen Christ, who dwells in us, and we in Him. We no longer must face the trials and struggles of this world alone because He is with us. And we no longer must fear death because He has conquered death and promised us eternal life with Him. Now that is truly a meaningful celebration – no prizes necessary!

Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!