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Dear brothers and sisters,

the joy of Easter reaches us in every place, in every country, in every situation. I greet you with the Resurrection of Christ, which never ceases to surprise and, at the same time, to encourage and strengthen us.

The Jubilee of 2025 has reminded us that we are in great need of hope. Every family, every nation, the whole world needs hope. It is also needed by Lithuanian communities throughout the diaspora, especially those whose numbers are dwindling, whose younger generation does not always retain their mother tongue or are distancing themselves away from a Lithuanian parish or community. However, let us be aware of the good examples where even the descendants of emigrants who do not speak Lithuanian become active members of the community, where priests of other nationalities who once lived in Lithuania willingly serve Lithuanians abroad, where active lay people proclaim the Word of God in Lithuanian, and where traditional hymns are heard where Lithuanian priests are not available.

These are reflections of hope, yet they are surpassed by the resurrection of Christ. This is the foundation of our hope, not only in times of success or ordinary difficulties, but also in facing the greatest challenges, when we find no solutions, no way out. Christ gives us hope even when things seem hopeless (cf. Rom 4:18).

Christ's resurrection reveals that what we see with the eyes of the body is not the ultimate reality. God has designed far more than we can imagine. The Gospel tells us that the disciple whom Jesus loved "saw and believed" when he entered Christ's tomb (John 20:8). He saw the empty tomb and the dropped linen cloths, but faith led to an encounter with the risen Master. Faith helped him to see beyond human possibilities and perspectives and opened the way of hope. We need the same kind of vision. It is said that as long as life continues, there is hope. Pope Francis added: "We could say it another way: as long as there is hope, there is life." Even though we do not yet see the final victory of the Risen One, we maintain our hope by looking to Jesus, who showed a love that is stronger than hatred and conquered death. To live with courage in the face of all dangers and to keep hope alive, we need the "Easter eyes", which is what Bishop Klaus Hammerle, who lived in Germany in the last century, wishes us:

"I wish us an Easter eyes, that see life in death, forgiveness in guilt, unity in division, healing in wounds. I wish us an Easter eyes that see God in man, man in God, the other in oneself. And also, I wish us all Easter strength and peace, light, hope and faith that life is stronger than death."

As I greet you sincerely on the feast of the Resurrection of Christ, I pray that we too may have and share this Easter hope and faith.

Yours in Christ.

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