



UŽSIENIO LIETUVIŲ SIELOVADA

Pastoral Care of Lithuanians Abroad

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Easter 2026

“I came that they may have life
and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Easter morning, the message that the Church has tirelessly repeated throughout the ages resounds once more: **Christ is risen!** This means that life is stronger than death, light stronger than darkness, and love stronger than evil. God has conquered the dominion of death and evil, not by force, but by giving Himself.

The Gospels do not shy away from depicting the apostles' confusion and fear even on Easter Day, when, gripped by fear, they hid behind locked doors. Christ, coming to them, does not reproach or accuse them, but says, “Peace be with you,” and shows them his hands pierced by nails. God desires not only to forgive, but also to grant the fullness of life, as the evangelist John mentions. True, the fullness of life given by God does not protect us from hardship and pain. Even after the Resurrection, Christ's body still bears the wounds, yet they bear witness to God's love and to the fact that the Lord helps us overcome all difficulties.

Saint Paul reminds us that our life is already hidden in Christ, united with Him (cf. Col 3:3). When we forgive those who have hurt us, when we overcome selfishness and reach out to those who are suffering, when we resist the “culture of death,” we bear witness that the Risen One is alive within us.

The hope of Easter cannot remain an abstract idea—it must be embodied in our lives. Today, Lithuania and the Western world are experiencing a “demographic winter,” which is why it is so important to foster a positive attitude in society—among all of us—that children are not an obstacle to their parents' success, but a gift that helps their happiness grow. Every family that courageously welcomes new life bears witness to its faith and hope. Such families deserve not only kind words, but also real support. We must also turn our attention to older people, who often feel lonely—they need our attention and help, especially when their loved ones are far away.

Our concern for life calls us to remember all those who are suffering. When we look at the map of the world—Ukraine, the Middle East—we see harrowing human tragedies and the terrible consequences of war. May the feast of Easter, which proclaims the victory of life, always inspire us to help those who suffer and to pray ceaselessly to God for peace and tranquility.

Jesus did not leave his disciples alone, but gathered them into a spiritual family—the Church. Life is most beautiful when we share it. I pray that Lithuanian parishes and communities around the world may be places where everyone can feel accepted, heard, and loved.

Wishing you all a joyful and hopeful Holy Easter!

Archbishop Lionginas Virbalas, SJ
Delegate of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference
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