

Archbishop's 2024 Easter Message

*Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.*

(Isaiah 60: 1-2)

Dear People of the Archdiocese of St. John's:

The Easter Vigil liturgy begins in darkness and then light comes into that darkness, light that is prayed over, blest, shared and praised in song. The person carrying the newly blest and lighted Paschal Candle that symbolizes the Risen Christ sings: "Christ our Light!" to which all respond: "Thanks be to God!"

Everyone present is invited to share in this "Light of Christ" by holding a taper lit from the Paschal Candle. This lighted taper is a symbol of the lit candle presented on the day of baptism, a symbol of the "Light of Christ" passed on to them to be cherished, protected and shared through a life lived as a disciple of Christ, as a "Child of the Light".

In this year's *Message for the Month of Ramadan and 'ID Al-FITR'*, entitled "Christians and Muslims: Extinguish the Fire of War and Light the Candle of Peace", the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue wrote:

***As believers, we are also witnesses to hope, ... Hope can be symbolized by a candle, whose light radiates security and joy, whereas fire, uncontrolled, can lead to the destruction of fauna and flora, infrastructure and the loss of human lives.
Dear Muslim brothers and sisters, let us join in extinguishing the fires of hatred, violence and war, and instead light the gentle candle of peace, drawing upon resources for peace that are present in our rich human and religious traditions.***

Our world is very much in need of "Children of Light" and of "Witnesses to Hope". All around us there are uncontrolled "fires" of hatred, violence and war; physical "fires" in some regions of the world and verbal "fires" in our social media.

In the gospels, "Peace be with you" was the frequent greeting of the Resurrected Christ. It was a peace that he wished for all people and a peace that he wishes us as witnesses of hope and children of light to share with our world.

In their recent *Pastoral Letter on the Use of Social Media*, the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops included the following prayer:

***Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Help us to recognize the evil latent in a communication that does not build communion.
Help us to remove the venom from our judgements.
Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters.
You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world:
where there is shouting, let us practice listening;
where there is confusion, let us inspire harmony;
where there is ambiguity, let us bring clarity;
where there is exclusion, let us offer solidarity;
where there is sensationalism, let us use sobriety;
where there is superficiality, let us raise real questions;
where there is prejudice, let us awaken trust;
where there is hostility, let us bring respect;
where there is falsehood, let us bring truth. Amen.***

Asking that you join with me in opening yourselves to the peace Jesus wishes for each of us, and in being, especially during this Easter season, a "Child of Light" and a "Witness of Hope" for our world and all its people.

Yours in the Risen Lord Jesus Christ,

+Peter Hundt
Archbishop of St. John's.