

## Bishop Gainer's Easter Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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

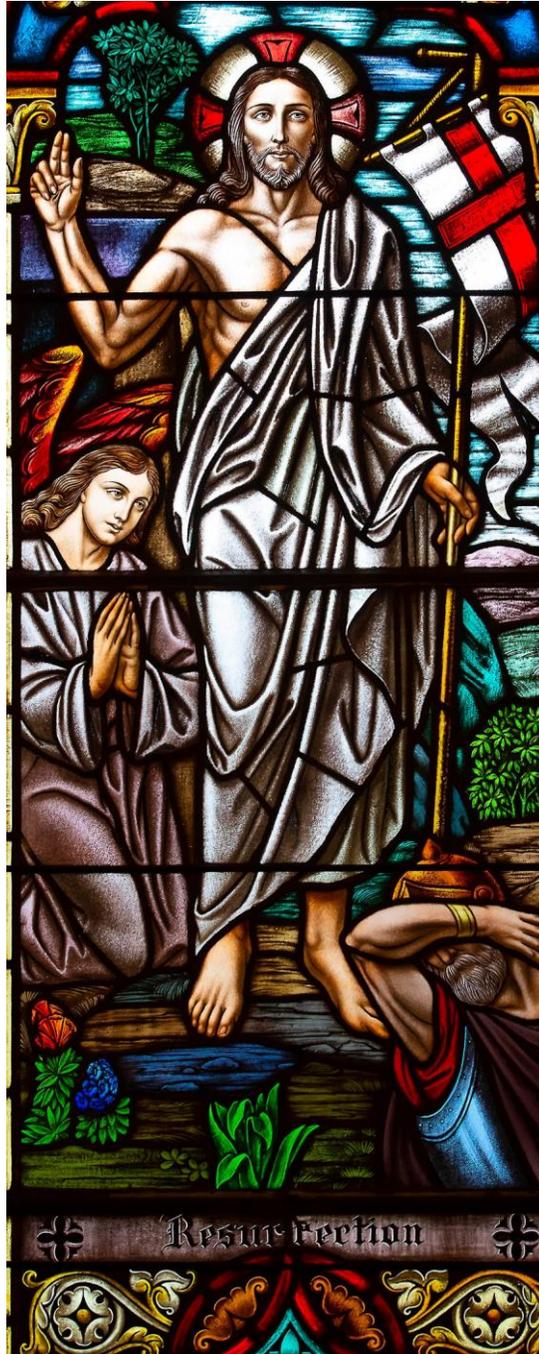
We hear these words this Easter during the Responsorial Psalm, yet, after this past year of living with the COVID-19 virus, rejoicing might be the last thing on our minds. With so many in our communities continuing to suffer the challenges associated with the pandemic – job loss, separation from loved ones, and, tragically, death – it may seem that there are few reasons to rejoice. However, in that same Psalm, we are told to

*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, or his mercy endures forever.*

*Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever."*

There are no doubts that this past year has been challenging, to say the least. Through our time of separation, it might have seemed as if we were in our own version of a tomb; parted from those we love and not able to gather together, we have all faced feelings of separation.

Perhaps we have felt like the disciples who found an empty tomb on Easter morning and were faced with confusion, distress and possibly panic. Even in these darkest of times, our Lord was always there.



CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

Stained-glass window of the Resurrection, at Assumption BVM Church in Centralia.

Always showing His love, compassion and mercy. It is only because of that empty tomb, because of His sacrifice on Good Friday, that we the have reassurance that our Risen Christ has defeated death and He is the light of the world. Nothing, neither darkness nor despair nor the coronavirus, will overcome us with Christ at our side.

This year, as we begin to see the "light" at the end of the pandemic tunnel, let us not forget these words from John 8:12,

*Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Christ is indeed the light of the world. Wherever we find ourselves this Easter on our life's journey, may Christ's Paschal Mystery be our joy and hope. And may we never stop rejoicing for the mighty things the Father has done and is doing even now for us in Christ Jesus. Christ is risen!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer  
Bishop of Harrisburg