



## Easter Message 2026

*“But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said’.” (Matthew 28:5-6)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, the Church joyfully proclaims the truth announced at the empty tomb: “He is not here, for he has been raised” (Matthew 28:6). This is a message not just proclaimed to the “whole world” but spoken personally to each of us.

From the beginning, God has desired an intimate, personal relationship with each of his children. Scripture reveals God as the one who created us out of love, who pursued us even when we turned away, and came to us in the fullest revelation of his love in Jesus Christ, suffering death to save us from our sin and restore our friendship with him. “Christ’s resurrection teaches us that no history is so marked by disappointment or sin that it cannot be visited by hope...However distant, lost or unworthy we may feel, there is no distance that can extinguish the unfailing power of God’s love” (Pope Leo XIV, October 8, 2025, General Audience).

Jesus died for us, personally and intentionally. He came to restore what was lost and draw us into communion with the Father. The Catechism reminds us that, “the cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the ‘one mediator between God and men’. But because in his incarnate divine person Jesus has in some way united himself to every man, ‘the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery’ is offered to all men” (CCC 618). As you gaze on Jesus crucified and risen, let this truth touch your heart: Jesus loves us and continues to pursue us with his love.

We encounter this love most intimately in the Mass when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, the representation of Calvary, where Jesus gives himself to us in intimate communion, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. This is why, at the Cathedral, we recently reflected on how our gestures and postures at Mass help us to dispose our hearts in openness to this mystery with adoration, humility and deep reverence (visit <https://www.immaculateconception.ca/> to learn more). When we approach the altar, we meet the One who longs to unite himself fully and completely to us. Let this Easter be the moment to be drawn into deeper unity with the Lord. Open your heart to him and all that he offers. Ask him to come even more deeply into your life. The Risen Christ is alive and on

the move, ready to pour out his mercy, joy, and transforming love from his heart to ours! Let us receive him with a resounding “Yes!”

May this Easter encounter with Divine Love, crucified and risen, renew our hearts and fill us with the joy of knowing the Living Saviour who calls us by name.

In the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Riesbeck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

✠ Christian Riesbeck, CC

Bishop of Saint John

March 31, 2026