

Dear Friends in Christ,

Rejoice in the Lord! Let me say it again Rejoice! Christ the Lord is risen; indeed, we rejoice and are glad for this day! As we begin the celebration of Easter season, I would like to wish you, and your loved ones, blessed and joyful Easter celebrations. I pray this season will be a time of unequalled joy, peace, and thanksgiving to God for His mercies and love for us. As a pastorate family, we thank God for the blessings received, and for the blessings to come as we work for the common good of our pastorate. Once again, I say rejoice, for the Lord is indeed risen. Alleluia!

The Season of Easter: The events of Easter call for celebration not only on Easter Sunday or the octave of Easter (8 days following Easter Sunday), which are observed the same as Easter Sunday, but the celebration extends throughout the fifty days of Easter season. Through the first eight days of Easter, the double alleluia is used at the dismissal as was used on Easter Sunday and the *Eucharistic Prayer I* is also commonly used. The Easter Candle, a symbol of the presence of the risen Christ among us, remains in the sanctuary near the ambo through the evening of the Pentecost day. Easter reminds us of the new life of Christ that is given to us at our baptism. Christ, *“Who for our sake paid Adam’s debt to the eternal Father, and, pouring out his own dear Blood, wiped clean the record of our ancient sinfulness. These then are the feasts of Passover, in which is slain the lamb, the one true lamb, whose Blood anoints the doorposts of believers.”* (from the *Exsultet*). White or Gold is the Easter liturgical color and special sacraments of baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation are highlighted during the Easter season.

Gratitude: I would like to thank all the people who joined hands in making this year’s Holy Week and Easter celebration a success in all the churches in our pastorate. We are grateful to the ministers at mass, servers, readers, extra ordinary ministers of the Eucharist, musicians, sacristans, and ushers. Our special gratitude goes to all the people who helped with cleaning the churches and rearranging the churches after each service. It took special talents to do the decorations in the churches all through the Holy Week and Triduum. My gratitude goes also to all our catechists, and the coordinators of RCIA program for helping prepare all the candidates for the reception of the sacraments. I would like to thank all our staff at the 4 parish offices for their hard work all through Lent leading up to Easter preparations.

Easter Week: The Parish Offices in all locations are closed for business on **Easter Monday, April 1st**. The parish offices will reopen on Easter, Tuesday, April 2nd. Please check the bulletin for St. John Paul II Pastorate weekday mass schedules. On behalf of all the priests of St. John Paul II Pastorate: Fr. John, Fr. Garrett, Fr. Luke, and myself, I wish you all a blessed Easter Day.

Happy Easter!

Fr. Paul