



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark
Easter 2021 Message



This Sunday, we celebrate the great feast of Easter and we begin a season of joy.

A year ago, our celebration was muted by the pandemic, which had only begun to cause so much hardship. Over the past year we have witnessed serious illness and death, violence and social unrest, and the economic hardships faced by individuals, families, and communities here at home and throughout the world. Still, despite everything, a year ago, we celebrated the miracle of our Redeemer's triumphant victory over sin and death!

If we could experience Easter joy a year ago, how much more jubilant we can be now, when there are clear signs of hope emerging all around us. But we're not there yet. Many people are still suffering the loss of loved ones, unemployment, and fear and anxiety. Yet, there is hope. Christ is risen. He has transformed our suffering and made lasting peace and joy possible for our troubled world.

Pope Francis often speaks of joy. With characteristic bluntness, the pope says that Christians should not look like sourpusses (literally "vinegar faces" in the original Spanish). We should rejoice in our freedom and remain confident in God's love for us. The joy of Easter springs from our gratitude to God for God's saving grace, God's forgiveness of our sins, and God's presence in our lives.

While natural disasters, pandemics, and hardships of every kind persist, Easter celebrates the great mystery that they can no longer condemn us to lives of misery and doom. Whatever our present circumstances, we rejoice at Easter time – because the Lord is risen and remains close to us now and always.

Even in dark moment, Easter joy gives us the confidence we need to overcome our anxious fears. God has reached out to us and loved us. We are not alone. Although "social distancing" is still in effect, we remain the gathering of God's people, the Church, united in Christ. We need not be afraid. God is with us always.

Christ's resurrection is the source of our hope. May this season of grace bring us lasting joy. Please share this joy generously with others during this blessed time and always!

Happy Easter! May the Lord bless you, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.