



Dear Friends in Christ: A blessed and joyous Easter to each of you!

God's raising of Jesus to new life is a life-changing reality for each one of us, because Jesus' resurrection has made it possible for you and me to know God in new and wondrous ways!

When Jesus was raised from the dead, his followers were transformed from fearful followers of their rabbi, Jesus, into disciples of the crucified and risen Lord! Indeed, everything, including them, was made new!

That's what being followers of the crucified and Risen Christ is all about: the gift of knowing God in new and wonderful ways! And we do know God in new and amazing ways! We see a newborn child ... and we marvel, *not* simply at the wonder of human birth ... but at our God ... whose creative power and graciousness stands behind all human life. We see others around us ... even those who differ from us and we marvel at God's unlimited and creative love that can encourage such diversity!

Yes, in our baptisms the Risen Christ makes it possible for you and me to know that God is gracious and good ... to know that we are God's own ... not simply here and now ... but forever!

For, in our baptisms you and I have died ... and been raised to new life! And, born anew each day, we open our eyes and we see the world around us in a whole new way ... as the world that Christ died for and was raised from death for!

In our baptisms, God offers us that new resurrected life, complete with new eyes that suddenly see all others as sisters and brothers!

Yes, with our baptized eyes ... opened again each new day ... you and I are changed to the core... no longer fearing the world or other people ... even those who seem different from us. Instead, we are set free *to care for all others* ... simply because of this truth: that Christ has died for them as well as us, ... and in doing so has made them our sisters and brothers ... beloved children who are one with God ... one with Christ ... and one with us!

So, go into Easter as the baptized, eyes-wide-open people of God ... and greet everyone you meet for who they really are ... *brothers and sisters in Christ, our crucified and Risen Lord!*

Yours, in Christ, *Pastor Jim*