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Rt Rev. Joseph Toal STB KC*HS
Bishop of Motherwell

Bishop Toal's Easter Message 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In wishing you a Happy Easter I pray that the Lord will bless you and your loved ones with his peace and joy as we celebrate his Resurrection.

Pope Francis has invited us to begin to prepare for the Jubilee Year of 2025, whose motto will be "Pilgrims of Hope". When we go on Pilgrimage we do set out full of hope – that the journey will go well and that we will reach our destination safely. So also with the journey of life – we move through Life trusting in God and hoping to reach a satisfying and fulfilling end in eternal life. The Lord, in rising from the dead, has gone before us and in him we place all our hopes. Each Easter then is an affirmation; and proclamation of Christ risen and ascended into heaven.

Hope depends on Faith. The Lenten journey has been a time of renewing our faith in the Lord at this particular moment in our journey on earth. We heard some of the great stories of Faith in the Old Testament and then the Lord calling people to faith in him as they listened to his words and experienced his healing power. Some responded with great enthusiasm, acclaiming Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah who entered Jerusalem triumphantly on a donkey on Palm Sunday. Others found it hard to do so, and indeed turned against him, leading to their cries for his crucifixion on Good Friday. The question for the people of Jerusalem and for ourselves is whether we believe or not. Hopefully our faith will have been renewed and strengthened this Lent, and we can renew our baptismal promises with fervour and conviction, sure in the faith we have received, and continue to live our lives by.

May our faith indeed remain strong in the year ahead and may we journey together as "Pilgrims of Hope" in the Church, confident that we will share in the Lord's Resurrection.

With my blessing this Joyful Eastertide,

Yours in Christ,

+ Joseph Toal