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### Easter 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

On Easter Sunday we begin the longest and most glorious season of the Church's year. The Easter season lasts for a full 50 days and, for this reason, Christians have called this festive time a "week of weeks." If we do the liturgical mathematics, seven weeks of seven days gives us only 49 days, but then we realize that the Solemnity of Pentecost brings that "week of weeks" to a 50<sup>th</sup> day, an extra day, which takes us beyond the way we measure our earthly time. This season then is itself a symbol of the fullness of time and the very goal of Christ's Resurrection.

God's Son Jesus died on the Cross to give us the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures over the coming weeks will speak of mysterious encounters of the disciples with the Risen Lord. This will help us to grow accustomed to how Jesus is now. He is risen and his human nature is marvellously transformed by God's Spirit. The Lord Jesus is no longer bound by space and time, and he "who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us" (Rm 8:34) is the "one Mediator between God and humankind." (1 Tim 2:5)

This Easter apprenticeship of 50 days will reveal that we too are called to glory. God's gift of the Holy Spirit makes us children of God who are already sharing in the life and freedom that comes from Christ's Death and Resurrection. Though we are still in this world and on the way to our Father's house, our lives are meant to show and speak something of that heavenly world "where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." (Col 3:2)

May these 50 days of Easter then be a sort of leaven of the Spirit for us! May they give us joy and courage to share with others the beauty of our faith, "an account of the hope that is in [us]" (1 Pt 3:15) and the love which "has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit." (Rom 5:5) Let us not be afraid to be such witnesses. The Word of God cannot be cancelled! If we try to follow the little daily inspirations of the Holy Spirit that arise in our heart, God will help us to do what is just and will give us the right words to say at the right moment.

The glory of heaven is shining on the face of the Risen Lord. May his light and love shine from our faces too. Easter joy and blessings to you all!

Sincerely in the Risen Lord,

*+ Stephen A. Hero*

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Bishop of Prince Albert