

Bishop's Monthly Reflection - April

Resurrection! Risen Life! Victory over Sin and Death! The Empty Tomb!

My brothers and sisters in the Risen Lord: Peace be with you!

"Peace be with you," these beautiful words were the first words spoken by the Risen Jesus to his Apostles. The Lord offers a peace that embraces the whole person: "Shalom!" It's God's blessing, his favor and consolation - His Presence- "God with us."

During the month of April, we will journey through 50 days of Easter. We will celebrate the Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost. It is the season of hope and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. For it is the Spirit, with his gifts and fruits, who will empower us to be the people God has called us to be.

The month of April, with its glorious solemnities, can offer to those who have experienced spiritual darkness, brokenness, weakness and pain, an opportunity to encounter the Risen Lord. Jesus is the one who can bring wholeness into the life of one who has been hurt, victimized or abused. The Lord Jesus has been given many titles over the ages, and there is one which vividly reflects the suffering and brokenness that he experienced during his passion and death, that of: victim.

This month is acknowledged as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Church and our society at large must stand together and say: "Enough is enough!" We are to protect our children and give our support to the prevention of child abuse. Prevention and healing is needed. As Jesus has overcome and survived the human experience of betrayal, brokenness, agony and death on the cross, by way of the resurrection, so can our brothers and sisters be raised up who have survived the trauma and devastation of all types of abuse, especially, sexual. They can be "raised up" by the grace and mercy that only Jesus can give them. We, too, can be instruments of helping our brothers and sisters to rise above the darkness of sexual abuse with our love and support.

Let us pray, reach out and be present to them, so that they may regain a sense of trust, healing and wholeness of life. May they see themselves on the road to healing and experience the empowerment of the Holy Spirit this coming Pentecost. May Jesus, the Risen Lord and Victor, grace all survivors of child abuse to raise them up, console and heal them.

Risen Jesus, True Victim & Victor, have mercy on us!

For information in the way the Diocese of Stockton is promoting the prevention of child abuse and offering outreach assistance to survivors of abuse, please refer to the Diocesan webpage— — — — .