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Dear Friends in Christ,

Before the proclamation of the gospel at the Easter Vigil liturgy, there is a deeply powerful and moving moment. It is the joyous triple Alleluia. It not only signals the end of our penitential observances but it expresses our passage with the Lord through his passion, death, and burial. Alleluia is our joyful shout of triumph for as Christ rises from the dead, so do we.

Yet, we may find that our Easter joy has been dampened this year in the face of the daunting challenges of war, the upheavals experienced by migrant families, the great turbulence and polarization in our political life, and the myriad uncertainties about our future and the future of our children. Can we sing Alleluia and mean it?

Experiencing those sentiments myself I am drawn to Saint Paul's words to the Thessalonians. In a moment of suffering loss, confusion and grief he wrote: "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died." (1Thessalonians 4:13-14)

Listen carefully to Paul's words. He tells the Thessalonians that they can grieve and that they can experience struggle and loss. But they must not grieve or suffer as those who have no hope, as those who do not believe that Jesus died and rose and will take us to himself. Like the Thessalonians, we do not ignore or deny the suffering and grief we are experiencing, but we are not held captive to this moment nor to this world. We hold fast to Christ our hope who draws us into a future defined and shaped by his Resurrection.

So, sisters and brothers, let's not hold back our shouts of joy. Let us sing with gusto our Alleluia for it bears witness to our enduring hope in Christ's Resurrection. It inspires us to do what we can to allow his risen life to take hold of and shape our lives and to empower us to reach out to our wounded world. A blessed Easter to all of you and your loved ones.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop of Chicago