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My Dear People,

A blessed and grace filled Easter to each and every one of you. For the disciples, that first Easter morning began with a sense of loss and absence. All of Jesus' followers were despondent over the crucifixion and death of Jesus. The leader and teacher they had followed for three years had been arrested and executed as a common criminal. They believed that that was the end of the good news of God's love that He had proclaimed to the world. But his death was not the end, but in reality just the beginning.

Out of devotion and dedication to the memory of the dead Lord, Mary Magdalene goes to the Christ's tomb early on Easter morning. There she discovers the empty tomb and then encounters the Risen Christ. For Mary Magdalene this encounter with the Risen Lord was hard to believe. But then the Risen Lord tells her that she is to bring the good news of his resurrection to the other disciples. Think of the joy and happiness this news brought to the disciples.

As the first disciples we rejoice today for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We rejoice not merely over the historical fact of the resurrection but we rejoice because we share in this event. Christ's victory over sin and death has been made our victory over sin and death through our baptisms. Today we are thankful not only for Christ's resurrection but also for the grace of our baptisms and the gift of our faith. This faith of ours is a pearl of great price.

Today as we rejoice in the Easter mystery, we -- like Mary Magdalene -- are urged to bring this good news of Jesus' Resurrection to others so that they might experience the joy we experience and share the faith that sustains us. This sharing and this teaching of the faith are a special responsibility of parents.

The family is the first teacher and sharer of the faith. We know in our world today this is a challenge when our culture and society militates against the teachings of our faith. But this feast of the Resurrection of Jesus is an occasion when we can renew our joy in the faith and our commitment to sharing our faith with others especially in our own families.

As we celebrate the Resurrection with joy and thanksgiving, I pray that all will, like Mary Magdalene, bring the good news of our faith to all we meet. May God bless you and your loved ones on this very special day.

Your Brother and Servant in the Lord,

Most Reverend Daniel F. Walsh
Bishop of Santa Rosa