



## *Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador*

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Christ is risen! In him, God's love has prevailed. Sin and death have been vanquished.

"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" So often, we find ourselves with Mary Magdalene at the sight of the empty tomb, neither understanding, nor fully cognizant of what has taken place. There is a disconnect between our lived experience and what our Saviour has accomplished. We are overcome with grief, with loss and with a sense of hopelessness in the face of human sin and death. The empty tomb is yet another sign of what is wrong with this world, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Mary Magdalene inability to see so often reflects our own inability to see. It is hard for us to be messengers of hope in the world, when we fail to see the signs of hope around us.

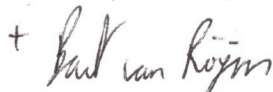
"Mary!" It is the Lord who calls her out of her stupor, doing so by name. Imagine Mary's amazement upon recognizing Jesus' voice. In the words of the Psalmist, "Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves." (Psalm 126:6). So, we, too, shout for joy -- we, too, want to cling to him -- we, too, tell of him to all those we meet. Mary Magdalene is transformed by joy. Hers is not a message that binds, but the good news that sets free; free to be the children of God.

Her joy wells up within her like life-giving water. She cannot hold it back. It gushes forth. Her joy is increased each time she shares it. "I have seen the Lord," she tells everyone. "I have seen the Lord." Her life is transformed. Weeping and sorrow are no more; doubt and negativity are dispersed. The proof is evident in her radiant joy.

As we come to the empty tomb with Mary, may we also behold the Risen Lord. And, as he calls us from death into new life, through the cleansing waters of our baptism, may we also become spirit-filled witnesses in all that we say and do.

To God be the glory, and to us the peace and joy.

Fraternally in Christ,

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Bishop Bart van Rooijen

