



His Most Reverend Héctor Vila, Bishop of Whitehorse

## Pastoral Letter for Easter Sunday 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

### **“Christ is risen! He is truly risen!”**

This ancient cry, the Kerygma that shattered the silence of the tomb, resounds today with an urgency that the world cannot suppress. It is like a voice carried across great distances, reaching even the farthest communities. Amid the uncertainty, chaos and unrest that mark our world, this proclamation remains the voice of Truth: Christ lives, and death has not prevailed. As we gather in our cathedral and parish churches, we do not merely recall a past event. We are drawn into it. We enter the Paschal Mystery itself, the passage from death to life. This is not just something we think about; it is something we are invited to live.

### **The Mystery of the Altar**

Our participation in the Holy Eucharist is a deep sharing, an immersion, in the death and resurrection of the Lord. As the Second Vatican Council teaches in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the liturgy is the “summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed”. We might picture this as reaching the height of a great mountain, where everything becomes clear and open before us. The liturgy is that high place where heaven and earth meet.

When we listen to the Word of God, we are not hearing a dead letter, like an old tape of the past, we are hearing a living Voice. God speaks here and now. When we interiorize this Word, when we let it sink into our hearts, it is like planting a seed in fertile soil. Over time, it takes root and begins to grow within us.

In the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Calvary and the glory of Easter are made present. This does not mean they happen again, but that we are brought into them. We do not stand outside as observers; we do not just watch, we enter in. In the liturgy, God speaks to us, forgives us, and gives us new life.

### **A Cry for Peace in a Broken World**

We cannot ignore the shadows that stretch across our global family. As Pope Leo XIV has observed recently, the cry of the people for peace comes from lands torn apart by the madness of war. Justice must overcome violence, but this change begins within each human heart. We must not think of these conflicts as distant tragedies that do not concern us. We are part of one human family. Their suffering touches us. We are united to a world wounded by conflict. The cry for peace rises from many lands, like a long and sorrowful echo.

As John Paul II taught: “There can be no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness” (*Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace 2002, 1*). Forgiveness may seem difficult, but we can think of it simply: it is the choice to stop the cycle of harm, like breaking a chain so it can no longer bind hearts or pass suffering from one person to another.

If peace does not dwell in the heart of the believer, how can it dwell in the world?

### **The Witness of Life and Family**

Here in our own diocese, across the Yukon and northern British Columbia, we face our own kind of “desert.” Not a desert of sand, but one that can appear in hearts, in loneliness, in discouragement, or in the threat of the dignity of the human person. Yet even in winter, life is never truly gone. Beneath the snow, it waits. In the same way, God’s grace is always at work.

Jesus died for all, and He has risen for all. Every human life is infinitely important to God. No life is outside His plan of salvation. For this reason, the Church calls us never to give up on life, but to live it fully, even when it includes suffering, the mystery of the cross. To live fully does not mean avoiding hardship but trusting in God’s plan for our life. Trusting that God is present within it and can bring good from it. Thus, life is sacred from its beginning to its natural end and the family is a holy place, a domestic church. Like a home that offers warmth and light, where love is welcomed, protected, and nurtured.

As Paul the Apostle reminds us, “you are not your own; you were bought at a price.” This means our lives are not without meaning or direction; they belong to God, who loves us. And knowing that many among us are weary and burdened, we pray for them and walk with them, that they may find rest in Christ, and that their yoke may be light, that their burden be made easier because He carries it with them.

### **The Call to Transformation**

Beloved, let this Easter be a turning point. Do not let its grace pass you by. In the North, we know what it is to wait for light. After the long darkness of winter, the return of the sun changes everything. Slowly, steadily, the light grows stronger, warmer and what seemed lifeless begins to awaken again. So it is with the Risen Christ. His light enters our lives and dispels the darkness of fear and the coldness of indifference. When we receive the Lord in the Eucharist, we receive the power to become witnesses; to live and share a Love that has already conquered the world through death and resurrection.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, who stood at the foot of the Cross and rejoiced at the Resurrection, guide us. May she teach us to trust, to hope, and to be a people who carry the light of the Risen Christ into the world.

In Christ,

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+ **Most Rev. Héctor Vila**  
Bishop of Whitehorse