

# The Florida Catholic

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Pensacola-Tallahassee Edition - Bishop's Statement

## Rejoice in the resurrection of Christ

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My dear friends in Christ,

In this Easter season we rejoice in the resurrection of Christ, who triumphed over suffering and death and rose to life. In his resurrection, he overcame the old enemies of the human family: fear and dread, hatred and violence, division and intolerance. These ancient enemies were real that day when Christ was raised up on the cross and they are real today.

Today, as then, they cause much human suffering and lead many to death. But Christ did overcome these adversaries that wound us and weaken us. He took on our weakness and our wounds by his willingness to suffer and die so that he might redeem our human state. This is the story of Easter. This is the reason we celebrate this great feast each year at a time when the earth comes back to life from its long winter sleep. It is a wonderful story, filled with hope and promise, meant to uplift the heart and instill in all its hearers renewed daring and courage to go on and rise above any threat to our joy and happiness.

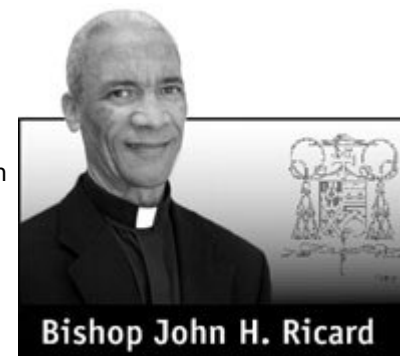
At Easter we pray that we may have faith to believe and receive the good news that he has risen. The first disciples of Jesus struggled to accept the message of the angels at the tomb. They slowly came to accept the testimony of the women who had seen him. Their eyes were only gradually opened to recognize him when they walked with him on the road to Emmaus. We, too, face the same challenge to believe and embrace the risen Lord in our midst. We, like them, face many obstacles to belief; they are well known to us. But despite the obstacles, we do embrace the challenge of faith and celebrate the wonder of the presence of the Lord among us.

Jesus announced to St. Thomas that they are blessed who believe without seeing. He blesses us for placing our faith in him. May that blessed faith bring you and your families great joy and peace. May it fill your lives with hope and may it bring you safely to that eternal Easter which is promised to those who believe.

**John H. Ricard, SSJ**  
Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee

[Back to Top](#)

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