

**“Ike nke
Mbilite n’Ọnwụ”.**

(Phil 3:10)



THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

*“I have accepted the loss of all other things,
and look on them all as filth
if only I can gain Christ... and come
to know him and the power of his resurrection”*

*As we shout “Alleluia,”
may the transforming power of Christ’s
resurrection be activated in our lives,
families and society.*

Happy Easter!!!

**+Peter Ebere Cardinal Okpaleke
Bishop of Ekwulobia Diocese**

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION (Phil 3:10)

“IKE NKE MBILITE N’ONWU”

2026 Easter Message of His Eminence, Peter Ebere Cardinal Okpaleke to the Faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Ekwulobia and to all People of Good Will

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Easter is the centre of the Christian faith. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then our faith is in vain. This is St. Paul’s presentation of the kernel of the Christian faith (1 Cor 15:14).

It is in the power of the resurrection that our ancestors in the faith bore witness and transmitted the Christian faith down the generations. St. Paul is a shining example. He wrote four of his letters from prison. These letters are called the Prison Epistles. Despite being written by a prisoner, these letters are, amazingly, about hope, joy, and trust in the Lord. In the letter to the Philippians, one of the Prison Epistles, St. Paul wrote: “always be joyful, then, in the Lord; I repeat, be joyful” (Phil 4:4).

Instead of complaining about his prison condition or feeling disappointed that God did not prevent his imprisonment, St. Paul encouraged the Philippians and all of us to be joyful, not only when things go according to plan and expectation, but in all circumstances, better still, despite the circumstance. Why? One may ask. Because of the import of the resurrection! The resurrection of Jesus shows that there is something more glorious than this earthly life, in comparison to which everything pales in significance and accounted for, by St. Paul, as filth (Phil 3:8).

On another note, the resurrection shows that God never abandoned Jesus even in his suffering and death. Similarly, God never abandons anyone. God accompanies us silently, with his crook and staff, through the valley of sorrow, darkness, and pain (Ps 23). God is ever faithful. God may not intervene when and how we expect or pray for. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, for the cup to pass him by and in the same breath, expressed complete trust in the Father by asking that His will be done (Matt 26:39). Despite his trust, Jesus still felt forsaken by God (Matt 27:46). But God vindicated him by raising him from the dead.

In sum, the resurrection challenges us to trust God and abandon ourselves completely into God's care while always persevering in the good. Such a shift in understanding and practice is the switch we need to flip for God to activate the power of the resurrection in us.

It is in the power of the resurrection that the first Christians joyfully faced lions and certain death during the persecution. Nearer home, mosquitoes and malaria were the lions faced by the missionaries who came to our land. As we recalled last year, during the one hundred and fortieth anniversary of the arrival of the Catholic missionaries at Onitsha on December 5, 1885, some of the missionaries died within weeks of their arrival. This notwithstanding, others kept coming, ready to give their lives, convinced that even if they lose this earthly life, that it would not be in vain; that God would water the faith with their blood. This is the power of the resurrection at work. Today, we are witnesses to the fruit of their perseverance.

Events in the world, in our communities, families, and in our lives as individuals strengthen the impression that things are falling apart. Evil seems to be gaining the upper hand. Conflicts are spreading. There is insecurity of lives and property. Marriages are breaking up and families are becoming cold war zones. Corruption – moral, economic, judicial and political – is becoming more entrenched. Social media hijack people's attention, normalize misinformation and disinformation and render the population manipulable. Hope is more difficult to sustain. Young people are becoming more frustrated as opportunities to flourish socio-economically dwindle. Some take to crime and many others take to drugs or to both.

In the face of these, Easter invites us all to open ourselves to the power of the resurrection made present and available to us in the liturgy. As we rejoice and shout 'alleluia!' because Jesus our Saviour, has overcome death, may we remember that if we die with him, we shall live in newness of life with him (Rom 6:8, 2 Tim 2:11). Dying with Jesus means flipping the switch and allowing God to activate the power of the resurrection in us to live out the values of God's kingdom – love, peace, truth and justice – so that through us, and like our ancestors in the faith and the missionaries mentioned above, God may unleash the power of the resurrection for the transformation of our lives, the society and the world.

Happy Easter! May God bless you abundantly!!