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*"If God is for us, who is against us?! If he did not spare His own Son, but gave him up for us all, how could He not also give all things with him?"
(Rom 8:31-32)*

Dear Lithuanians of the world and all people of good will,

I cordially greet you on the great feast of Easter! We joyfully sing "Alleluia" and proclaim that Christ is risen. This celebration awakens in us a new hope, a testimony of a life that does not end with death and the grave. The world is full of signs of death, and war is one of the most terrible. Many of us wonder why this happens, why God does not stop human suffering.

A decade ago, a Japanese girl, who had suffered an earthquake and a tsunami, asked Pope Benedict XVI why she had to suffer and be afraid. The Pope replied: "And I ask the same question: why is this so? Why do you have to suffer when others live in peace? We don't have the answer, but we know that Jesus, like you, suffered innocently, that the true God who appears in Jesus is on your side. This is very important, even if we have no answers, even if there is still sadness: God is on your side, and rest assured that He will help you."

Easter reminds us once again that God is with us, that Jesus' suffering and death reveal His love. Resurrected life is already present in us, revealing itself by turning upwards, captivating and not letting us down, even in the face of death.

The risen Jesus is with us also through the kindness of those who care for others; through the gentleness of those who overcome violence; through the love of all who do not despair. We, too, are called to be such signs of the resurrection. Let us support one another; let us be active in the life of our communities and parishes. May the joy of Easter spread in the world through us.

Dearly beloved, may this Easter spread into our lives the light of Christ, which is never extinguished; which lights the way to our neighbour; and which teaches us to assume responsibility and loving care for each other.

I wish everyone a blessed and joyful Easter!

+Lionginas Virbalas, SJ
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