

## CELEBRATION OF NEW LIFE

Easter is one of the most important celebrations of the Christian Church. All over the world, believers focus on a key teaching of Christian faith—belief in the resurrection of their Lord from death and the hope of eternal life in the world to come. This is a celebration filled with joy and energy. Appropriate to the celebration, reminders of new life abound. It is springtime! New life bursts forth—the buds on the trees, the small blades of grass, colorful flower blossoms, the warm sunshine, and the gentle rains. The death of winter cannot prevail! God gently recreates the earth, and all becomes like new. Everything seems refreshed with a new vitality, from the air that we breathe to the brilliant colors we see, from the chirping of the birds around us to the busy activities of humans once again enjoying the outdoors. We toss aside our winter coats and pull out the lace, the bonnets, and the pastels. We stretch out in the warmth of the sun. We are happy just to be alive. God is renewing his creation, and it is a marvelous experience.

This refocusing on the simple pleasures of life is important. How easily we forget the importance of life itself. How quickly we allow our lives to be cluttered by what is burdensome and unnecessary. Modern living is all too often congested and cluttered. By way of contrast, focus on the resurrection calls us back to priorities, to the most important things like life and death, love and joy, peace and quietness. This message of resurrection is a basic message. On that first resurrection morning, the angels informed Mary Magdalene, Salome, and the others, “He is not here, but he is risen.” The message is clear: “He is alive! Take note! Give thanks and rejoice!” And when the risen Teacher tells us, “Peace be with you,” his message also is clear: “You are alive! Take note! Give thanks and rejoice!” It is like the old cliché, “Stop and smell the roses.” The Master is saying to each of us, “Stop and smell the sweet fragrant aroma of new life!”