



Diocesan Centre  
Coursington Road  
Motherwell  
ML1 1PP

**Rt Rev. Joseph Toal** STB KC\*HS  
**Bishop of Motherwell**

### **Bishop Toal's Easter Message 2022**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

I recently read an Easter Letter from St Athanasius, written 1700 years ago, and it offers encouragement as we prepare to celebrate Easter in 2022. Here are the words of one of our Great Fathers of the Church:

*"Moreover, my friends, the God who first established this feast for us allows us to celebrate it each year. He, who gave up his Son to death for our salvation, from the same motive gives us this Feast, which is commemorated each year.*

*This Feast guides us through the trials that meet us in the world. God now brings us the joy of salvation that shines out from this Feast, as he brings us together to form one assembly, uniting us all in spirit in every place, allowing us to pray together and to offer common thanksgiving, as is our duty on this feast. Such is the wonder of his love: he gathers to this feast those who are far apart, and brings together in unity of faith those who may be physically separated from each other."*

As we celebrate, filled with the "joy of salvation", we give thanks to God for the gift of the Lord's saving Death and Resurrection and join with our brothers and sisters across the world in doing so. Although physically apart we are united in faith, and this bond of faith inspires our love and our desire to show that love in every way possible. We feel particularly close this Easter to the people of Ukraine, and those of other nations, on whom war and its dreadful consequences have been inflicted. May Jesus, who himself suffered such a brutal death, comfort those who are suffering so much and keep the hope of peace alive – the peace he offered his disciples when he appeared on Easter Sunday.

St Athanasius reminds us that the celebration of Easter guides us through the trials that meet us in the world, and we all need that reassurance in our present troubles. We have come through the pandemic, somewhat battered and bruised, and now we face the 'Cost of Living Crisis'. There seems to be little respite, but we need to persevere with faith and trust in the Lord, and renew our efforts to support those most in need, wherever they may be.

We can admire the great courage of Our Lady and St John as they stood at the foot of the Cross, giving **public** witness to their love for Jesus as he suffered and died. There is a call to all of us to imitate them in offering this **public** witness to the Lord in the practice and living of our Catholic Faith. The Risen Lord poured out the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and his first Disciples and filled them with the necessary courage to proclaim him as Lord and invite others to place their faith and hope in Him.

T: +44(0)1698 269114 F: +44(0)1698 275630 W: [www.motherwelldiocese.org](http://www.motherwelldiocese.org) E: [chancellor@rcdom.org.uk](mailto:chancellor@rcdom.org.uk)

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We are filled with the same Spirit and ask the Lord to inspire us to be his true and faithful disciples in our present troubled world.

I wish you a very Happy Easter and pray that the Lord will fill you with his peace and courage.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Joseph Toal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

**+ Joseph Toal**