

## **Easter Message 2019**

One Saturday afternoon earlier in Lent I visited people in two different aged care homes in Cairns.

Maybe it is because I now am over seventy (70) myself – in the *afternoon tea time of life* - as an English writer quaintly described it – but I was never more struck than on those visits by the frailty of body and mind in old age.

And we are all now living so much longer!

The French philosopher, or perhaps more accurately described as a popularist, Voltaire (1694-1778), when asked what age he was, responded perceptively or poignantly: *I have been dying for the last seventy years.*

Our lives can be a strange series of small deaths and minor resurrections. We can be ill and then recover; we can be grief-stricken and then restored.

The Lord Himself died and rose aged thirty-three (33), which we consider to be tragically young. Yet for His time and place that was not necessarily so. With then a much shorter average life expectancy, particularly for males, He was at least in the mature years of life.

Many of us now alive may live three (3) times as long – to ninety-nine (99), if we do not quite make it to the Hundred (100) in time to receive the telegram (or whatever you get now) from King William. I am a few months older than Prince Charles, but consider myself in rather better shape than he is. I might yet beat him to the Hundred!

However, from those nursing home visits and from intimations of my own mortality, the words spoken to Elijah take on a new resonance:

*'Get up and eat, or the journey will be too long for you.'* (1 King: 19.7)

For ourselves, as Christians and hopefully becoming ever more Christ-like, our food is Eucharist. Each time we celebrate and receive we participate in His death and His resurrection.

+James Foley  
**Bishop of Cairns**