



Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Port Pirie - Bishop



8th April 2020
20/144

Easter and COVID-19
Pastoral Letter for Easter 2020
to the Christian Faithful of the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie

Dear Sisters & Brothers

In its history the Church has often had to live through times of plague and pestilence. In such times there is a combination of suffering and dread. Plague was like a walking assassin, unknown and undetectable. In the twenty-first century we thought we were beyond such experiences. Never did we think there would be such an international calamity.

We know that such times, as in war, can bring out the finest in people despite the horror. On the human level families are finding out that there is more conversation and interaction as a group. There is only so much television one can watch in one day. Despite the unemployment there is a quiet sense of confidence that by working together the present ills will dissipate. A product of our suffering may be that after this trial there will be a greater appreciation of the human community, what we do, and who the people are with whom we work. The deprivation of the Eucharist and the closure of our churches is creating a sense of spiritual hunger. A whole new form of religious experience is being experienced by many as they bring online devotion, like a streamed Mass, into their homes. People are going out of their way to ensure their non-electronic neighbours are still being held in a sense of parish community. The quality of our lives and a sense of closeness to the Lord will deepen as His grace works within us.

It is a new Church that we will open up to after all this. May we learn from the saying that the buildings are closed, but the churches are open, because we are the Church.

The Cross was planted solidly in the earth, in our ground, where our trials and sorrows and vexations are. Christ stretched out His arms between Heaven and Earth, connecting the two worlds through His suffering and offering. He caught us up in that act, we with our own anxieties and worries and illnesses, and transformed them into the truth of the Resurrection. The great Easter shout, that Christ is truly risen, and therefore death and all diminishment has been transformed gives us strength. Christ did not avoid death, but underwent it, as we all must, but in undergoing it He overcame it. With His grace we too overcome whatever has been diminishing us in this contagion, and through the Resurrection live with a Christian hope that comes from our knowledge of Christ's faithfulness. In the words of the prayer from the Breviary, "Fill us with all joy and peace in believing – by the power of the Holy Spirit enlarge the horizons of our hope."

Yours in Christ

+ Gregory O'Kelly SJ
Apostolic Administrator
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