

St Mary's Cathedral Parish



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19th April 2020, Second Sunday of the Easter
(Divine Mercy) Year A/2

St Mary's Cathedral—Cnr Harrington & Patrick Streets, Hobart
Sacred Heart Church—Cross St, New Town

Responsorial Psalm: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.
Alleluia!

Gospel Acclamation : Alleluia, alleluia!
You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me; but still believe!
Alleluia !

This week's Readings: Acts 2:42-47; 1 Pt 1:3-9; Jn 20:19-31

Next week's Readings: Act 2:14,22-33; 1 Pet 1:17-21;
LK 24:13-35

"My Lord and My God"

The second reading for today's Mass is from the first letter of St. Peter. This reading could not be more appropriate for us in these testing times. To his followers he wrote: through your faith, God's power will save you until the salvation which had been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials, so that when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proven like gold, only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire, and then you will have praise and the glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him and still without seeing him you are already filled with the joy so glorious that it cannot be described because you believed, and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls; (Pt. 1:3-9).

The disciple's journey to complete faith in Jesus was gradual. From the first call to the disciples to follow him, their daily relationship with him, opened their mind and hearts as they witnessed the development of the kingdom of the God among the needy. They saw his actions and heard his words and noted the crowds gathering around him. 'Open my eyes and ears to see and hear you more clearly, to love as you Jesus loved, and to form my voice to speak your word's.' Recall and reflect for a moment on Mary Magdalene. She only knew it was Jesus speaking when she HEARD his voice. Thomas wanted proof that Jesus was alive; he wanted to touch and feel the presence of Jesus. How, where, when and why, do we meet Jesus in our everyday lives.



The gift of God's mercy is bound up in faith that believes that unseen, hope which draws us towards the fulfilment of the promise of Eternal Life, and love that binds us together as one family in Christ. 'I am the vine, you are the branches.' Stay with us Lord as we place our trust in you. Alleluia.

Sr. Monica Shelverton PVBVM

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY



Dear Friends in Christ,

Kindly note that Archbishop Julian Porteous has organized the following a liturgical programme for Divine Mercy Sunday for the Catholic faithful:

- 1. The faithful may do in silence an examination of conscience around 2.30 pm on Sunday 19th April 2020 and recite Confiteor before a Divine Mercy Image at home.**
- 2. On the same day at 3 pm, Archbishop Julian Porteous will conduct from St. Mary's Cathedral, the Recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the Exposition Blessed Sacrament followed by Benediction and the faithful may participate in the liturgy via live streaming.**

Those wish to take part can join the online liturgy via links provided on the Cathedral Facebook page, St Mary's Cathedral Hobart website and through Archdiocese of Hobart live streaming YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBzten6uVS-Ymf-7KVUEepQ>

May the Risen Lord's joy and peace fill your hearts!

Fr Shammi Perera Administrator –St. Mary's Cathedral Parish



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April 11, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Peace and Healing of the Risen Lord be with you!

As you are no doubt aware, due to social distancing requirements the celebration of public Mass has been suspended indefinitely by Decree of the Archbishop, His Grace Julian Porteous. During this time, the 10:30am Sunday mass will be live streamed each week via the Parish website and Facebook page.

The current pandemic situation has altered our lives in many ways, and in these challenging times, the primary focus of the Parish is on facilitating prayer, reflection and pastoral care for Parishioners while they are unable to attend Mass in person.

The Parish Finance and Maintenance Committee is meeting by teleconference regularly and is working to ensure the Parish remains financially sustainable throughout the immediate crisis and beyond. It is already evident however that the suspension of public Masses has and will continue to have a significant financial impact on the Parish, given a substantial portion of Parish income is derived from Planned Giving and the collection plate.

The Committee recognizes that many people have been impacted financially by the crisis and as a result, some Parishioners may not be able to contribute. The purpose of this letter is to encourage those Parishioners who are in a position to assist to continue to make regular financial contributions to the Parish. In the current environment of social distancing, the Parish has preferred method of contribution is by direct payment to the Parish bank account: BSB 067 000 Account 10315740. Please consider making planned giving contributions regularly (weekly or monthly) in this way.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Shammi Nilantha Perera

Administrator

St. Mary's Cathedral Presbytery

99 Barrack Street, Hobart 7000, Tasmania, Australia

Sundays Readings

Read at Home

Second Sunday of Easter 19 April 2020 Collect God



Collect

God of everlasting mercy,
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,
that all may grasp and rightly understand
in what font they have been washed,
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Readings and Commentaries

With only two exceptions (the third Sunday of Easter and Ascension Sunday) the gospel reading throughout the Easter season is taken from John. The first reading always comes from the Acts of the Apostles. What varies from year to year is the source of the second reading: in Year A the first letter of Peter, in Year B the first letter of John, in Year C the book of Revelation.

There is an additional difference on this Sunday. The gospel reading (John 20:19–31) remains the same each year while the first and second readings vary.

For most of the liturgical year there is an explicit connection between the first reading from the Hebrew scriptures and the gospel; during some seasons there is a deliberate link between the second reading and one or both of the other two. Things are different during the Easter season. There is no formal link between any of the readings but in one way or another they combine to teach us about life in the Spirit of the risen Lord. This is the time of mystagogical catechesis for the newly baptised; the whole community joins them in exploring the implications of baptism.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

2:42–47

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone. The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

First Reading

We start with a snapshot of the early Christian community in Jerusalem. Luke paints an idyllic picture of a harmonious, faithful, prayerful and joyful community that shared everything “gladly and generously”. It is best to see this as an idealized portrait, Luke’s sketch of what a Christian community should look like. There is evidence elsewhere in the Acts of the Apostles that this ideal was not always realised in full. Indeed most of Paul’s letters were occasioned by reports of serious problems within the communities he had founded. However much the reality fell short, the ideal that Luke puts before us is still valid and powerfully attractive.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 117: 2–4, 13–15, 22–24

R. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or

R. Alleluia.

Let the sons of Israel say: ‘His love has no end.’

Let the sons of Aaron say: ‘His love has no end.’

Let those who fear the Lord say: ‘His love has no end.’ **R.**

I was thrust, thrust down and falling but the Lord was my helper.

The Lord is my strength and my song; he was my Saviour.

There are shouts of joy and victory in the tents of the just. **R.**

The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes.

This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad. **R.**

A reading from the first letter of St Peter 1:3–9

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God’s power will guard you until the salvation which had been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold – only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire – and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

Responsorial Psalm

As on Easter Sunday both the response and the verses of the responsorial psalm come from Psalm 117/118. This song of thanksgiving for deliverance from distress was widely used by the early Christian community to interpret Jesus’ death and resurrection. The response is taken from the very first verse of the psalm. It is a joyful summons to give praise and thanks, entirely apt for the Easter season. Because it has two parts to it, the reader needs to pronounce the end of the first phrase – “for he is good” – with an upward inflexion so that the congregation does not begin to repeat the response prematurely. A brief pause should follow, to allow the second phrase – “his love is everlasting” – to be given its proper attention. A glance at the congregation will help cue them in for their response. The reader will also need to give clear vocal and visual cues to the congregation for the response to the verses. These are all in six-line form rather than the more common four. From beginning to end the spirit of the psalm is one of heartfelt praise and thanks.

Second Reading

Today's second reading is the first in a series of six passages read from the first letter of Peter. Unlike those of Paul, this letter is not addressed to a particular Christian community. It seems to be a circular letter sent around Christian communities in what is now the north of Turkey. Whether it was authored by Peter himself or by a later disciple is unclear. Its place and date of composition are also disputed. It may have originated in Rome in the second half of the first century. The letter is in the form of an exhortation, written to support Christians facing social rejection and opposition because their beliefs and values put them at odds with the dominant culture. The author encourages them to have the courage of their convictions but not to behave in any unnecessarily provocative ways – a challenge that remains to this day. Because it spells out the implications of baptism for Christian living, it is a most appropriate text for reading in the Easter season. This first extract is also the most difficult. It is an extended prayer of blessing for the gift of salvation. The sentences are long and complex.

Readers will need to study them carefully and rehearse the whole passage aloud several times. It may help to try and write down the key thoughts as short units and to put them in a clear sequence. This is a reading that cannot be hurried. The reader's task is to guide the congregation through this dense text so that they do not get lost in its forest of phrases. This can only happen if the reader is clear about the core assertions being made and about what is additional and explanatory. In spite of the challenges it presents, this is an inspiring text.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 20:19–31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.' Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.' There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

Gospel

The importance of today's gospel story is shown by the fact that it led to the original conclusion of John's gospel. The story proper falls into two parts: the appearance of the risen Lord to the assembled disciples on the first Easter Day and his appearance before Thomas a week later. John presents Jesus' resurrection, his giving the Spirit and the commissioning of the disciples in a single unified sequence. By contrast, the gospel writer Luke introduces a time-span of forty days before Jesus' ascension, and fifty days before the outpouring of the Spirit. Each is communicating the same profound truth within a different theological framework. The text for today can be subdivided into four parts. In part one, Jesus appears to the fear filled disciples and greets them with peace. This twofold greeting should be given strong emphasis. Part two consists of Jesus' commissioning the disciples and breathing out his Spirit upon them. Part three relates the encounter between the risen Lord and the apostle Thomas, culminating in words that implicate us: "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe". The reading comes to a climax with the final summary of the gospel's purpose: "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name". Each part should be heard by the congregation as a distinct unit. The reading as a whole is a wonderful invitation to renew our faith in Jesus and to live in the peace and joy of his Spirit.

Concluding Prayers

Almighty and all-merciful God, lover of the human race, healer of all our wounds, in whom there is no shadow of death, save us in this time of crisis; grant wisdom and courage to our leaders; watch over all medical people as they tend the sick and work for a cure; stir in us a sense of solidarity beyond all isolation; if our doors are closed, let our hearts be open. By the power of your love destroy the virus of fear, that hope may never die and the light of Easter, the triumph of life, may shine upon us and the whole world. Through Jesus Christ, the Lord risen from the dead, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

Holy Mary, health of the sick, pray for us.

St Joseph, guardian of us all, pray for us.

(Most Rev. Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of Brisbane)

or

Gracious God,

We give thanks anew for your providence and presence. We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas. We pray for those in need of healing. We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving. We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response. We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders. We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable. This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(Ecumenical prayer from the National Council of Churches. We have been invited to pray this prayer at 7pm each day.)

Dear Parishioners of St Mary's Cathedral and Sacred Heart Communities,

It is with a heavy heart that the Archdiocese of Hobart is implementing measures to stem the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID 19). Archbishop Julian Porteous has suspended the public celebration of all Masses, for an indefinite period. In light of the above decision, I kindly request you to honour the Lord's Day by dedicating your time to family prayer, reflections on scripture and other spiritual exercises.



You may participate in Sunday Mass online via this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBzten6uVS-Ymf-7KVUEepQ>

St. Mary's Cathedral 10.30 am Mass will be live streamed every Sunday from now on via the above link.

This live streaming of Sunday Mass also could be accessed via our St. Mary's Cathedral website Roman Catholic Cathedral | St Mary's Cathedral Hobart | Hobart and our Facebook page: Cathedral Parish Hobart - St Mary's Cathedral & Sacred Heart Church.

However, in case of emergency, you may contact me directly on my mobile 0417 571 815 (text preferred – leave your name & contact number) or ring the parish office number 6234 4463.

The Lord's mercy endures forever!

Fr Shammi Perera (Administrator)

ON SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

In his 2003 encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, St John Paul II wrote "The Eucharist is the culmination of all the sacraments in perfecting our communion with God ... the mystery of communion is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God, and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union." Therefore, he went on to say that we should constantly desire the sacrament of the Eucharist. When we cannot get to Mass we should receive "spiritual communion" with the Lord. This practice, he wrote, "has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life." Saint Teresa of Avila wrote: "When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it, the love of God will be greatly impressed on you."



The following is extracted from an article in the National Catholic Register:-

By making an Act of Spiritual Communion, we express our faith in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist and ask Him to unite Himself with us. Here is the Act of Spiritual Communion written by St. Alphonsus de Liguori:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,

come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

[https://www.ncregister.com/blog/armstrong/if-you-cant-receive-communion-make-a-spiritual communion](https://www.ncregister.com/blog/armstrong/if-you-cant-receive-communion-make-a-spiritual-communion)

Another prayer for Spiritual Communion comes from St Francis of Assisi

I believe that You, O Jesus, are in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You and desire You. Come into my heart. I embrace You.

Oh, never leave me.

May the burning and most sweet power of Your love, O Lord Jesus Christ I beseech You, absorb my mind that I may die through love of Your love, who were graciously pleased to die through love of my love. Amen.

A FEW TIPS TO STAY SPIRITUALLY ALIVE



Structure your day

Kindly ask the Lord's grace to structure your day to give yourself some variety even though you may be at home quite a lot. Make sure you include Scripture reading, prayer and spiritual reading in your daily routine. In this time, it is easy for the evil one to craftily sow the seeds of spiritual apathy and sloth in your soul. Hence, you may find the following suggestions helpful for you to grow in your spiritual journey with the Lord:

Sunday Scripture Readings and Reflection

19 April	2nd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:42-47; 1 Pet 1:3-9; Jn 20:19-31
26 April	3rd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:14, 22-23; 1 Pet 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35
3 May	4th Sunday of Easter	Acts 2:14, 36-41; 1 Pet 2:20-25; Jn 10:1-10
10 May	5th Sunday of Easter	Acts 6:1-7; 1 Pet 2:4-9; Jn 14:1-12
17 May	6th Sunday of Easter	Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; 1 Pet 3:15-18; Jn 14:15-21
24 May	Ascension of the Lord	Acts 1:1-11; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20
31 May	Pentecost Sunday	Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13; Jn 20:19-23

7 June	Most Holy Trinity	Ex 34:4-6, 8-9; 2 Cor 13:11-13; Jn 3:16-18
14 June	Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)	Deut 8:2-3, 14-16; 1 Cor 10:16-17; Jn 6:51-58
21 June	12th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Jer 20:10-13; Rom 5:12-15; Mt 10:26-33
28 June	13th Sunday in Ordinary Time	2 Kg 4:8-11, 14-16; Rom 6:3-4, 8-11; Mt 10:37-42

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website has a page where you can read the Scripture readings for the Mass on any day. There you can also listen to them being read out. There is also a link to a short reflection on the readings for any day, delivered via YouTube. In your web browser go to <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings>

Recitation of the Holy Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet

Some well-known prayers you could use are the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet (both can be accessed online).

From St Patrick's Breastplate

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me; Body of Christ, save me;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me;
Water from the side of Christ, wash me;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me; O good Jesus, hear me;
Within Your wounds, hide me;
Never let me be separated from You;
From the evil one, protect me;
At the hour of my death, call me; And bid me to come to You;
That with your saints, I may praise you forever and ever. AMEN.

St Teresa of Avila's Bookmark

Let nothing disturb you; nothing frighten you. All things are passing. God never changes. Patience obtains all things. Nothing is wanting to him who possesses God. God alone suffices.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defence against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Prayer to use during the Coronavirus Pandemic

O Mary, Mother of God and Health of the Sick, we your children entrust ourselves to you at this time of despair and uncertainty. Mary, Help of Christians, you are our patroness and protector of the People of Australia. We surrender to you at this time all victims of the coronavirus pandemic, their families and those who are gripped by fear and anxiety. We, your children, ask you to intercede before your Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, so that, as at the wedding feast of Cana in Galilee, we may return to joy and feasting after this time of trial.

We also entreat you, Blessed Mother, to usher into the hearts of humanity, the wisdom and strength of the Holy Spirit and the fortitude of the same Spirit into the lives of medical practitioners, emergency workers, political leaders and all involved in the current predicament, so that, having faced this trial, we may rejoice one day with you and all the saints and be led through the Cross to the glory of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SOME TIPS TO BE CONNECTED WITH THE LORD AND TO BE A SAVVY ONLINE CATHOLIC

Holy Eucharist Online! Archbishop Julian Porteous and Cathedral Clergy have been live streaming Holy Eucharist from St. Mary's Cathedral Hobart across the diocese from 22nd March, every Sunday 10.30 am , Chrism Mass (Tuesday 7th April at 7 pm), Mass of the Lord's Supper (Holy Thursday 9th April at 7 pm), Friday of the Pasion of the Lord (Good Friday 10th April at 3 pm), Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday 11th April at 7 pm), Easter Sunday (Sunday 12th April at 10.30 am). All you need to do is to click the link below:

⇒ As of 17 March (St Patrick's feast-day), **Bishop Robert Barron** has kindly made available indefinitely a daily Mass online at <https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass> Because of the time difference between Australia and the USA, the Mass of the day will be available for us quite late at night; however, we can still access it the following day. This is much more than the early Catholics had during colonial times. If you wish to prepare the Sunday readings ahead of time, you will find a complete list from 29 March to 28 June on page 3.

⇒ Readings for every day of the week can be found at https://emmausjourney.org/daily_reading.php
This site has lots of other good things including reflections on the Sunday readings for all Sundays.

⇒ **For access to the parish Formed subscription**, go to **formed.org** in your web browser and click 'Sign Up' then on the next page select "I Belong to a Parish or Organization". Start typing in our parish by name, "**St Mary Cathedral 164 Harrington St Hobart TAS**". Enter your email address and you will be sent an e-mail. Click on the e-mail and you're in!



⇒ **Formed For Children and Youth** : Parents, please use formed.org (above) for your children during this time. On Formed, go to Movies, then Kids and you will find a veritable cornucopia of material suitable for your children to view, e.g. Br. Francis videos, various saints and heroes, stories, as well as cartoons and animated Bible stories that teach children about the faith. Happy viewing, Kids!

⇒ **Laudate App**: The Mass readings for any day can be read on your smart phone, tablet or computer through the free app **Laudate** which can be downloaded from Google Play or the App Store. **Laudate** also has access to the Prayer of the Church and details of the Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Stations of the Cross and many other prayers and links to the Catechism, The Bible and the Eternal Word Television Network and much more.

A FEW FRIENDLY REMINDERS

Weekly Offerings



The parish will still have outgoings during this difficult period, so we encourage all parishioners to keep up their weekly offerings in one of these ways:

- (1) Deposit the money to the Cathedral bank account. Acc Name: St Mary's Cathedral Parish;
BSB: 067 000; Acc No: 10315740.
- (2) Bring your envelopes to the office at the end of the month.
- (3) Continue to put money in your envelopes, and bring them to the first Mass when the situation improves.

IMITATE YOUR SPIRITUAL FOREFATHERS IN FAITH!



In early colonial years, Catholic converts were observed carrying rosary beads on to their ships. Catechists also provided them with various books of devotional reading for the voyage and the hard years ahead. Many of the soldiers sent with them were Catholic too, as were a few of the earliest settlers, and these undoubtedly did likewise. The Faith was carried in hearts, but also in signs and actions. Communal recitation of the Rosary was common, for instance, providing a means for Catholics to gather and pray together.

The first official Catholic chapel in Tasmania was only founded in the 1820s, almost a generation after European settlement began. This came soon after the first priest arrived, who was followed some years later by more priests and a bishop. Prior to this foundation of the institutional apparatus, Tasmanian Catholicism was lived by individuals and families and lay communities who, much like certain Amazonian communities today, were at least occasionally visited by a priest aboard a passing ship. So, as we undergo the trials of this present pandemic, it is worth remembering that our own history teaches us that even when the sacramental life of the Church is limited, through prayer the Faith will endure.

By Dr Nick Brodie

FOOD FOR THE SOUL!

MORSEL 1

One night, I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand, sometimes two sets, sometimes only one. I said to the Lord: "You promised that if I followed You, You would walk with me always, but I can see that during the most trying periods of my life, there's only one set of footprints. Why weren't you there when I needed you most?" The Lord replied: "The years where you see only one set of footprints, my beloved child, were the years I was carrying you."

Please access formed.org and keep viewing spiritual content and keep on praying!

MORSEL 2

In these coming weeks, let us join Our Lady, Saint Joseph, all the angels and saints in praising God for His many blessings to us, remembering that praise and thanksgiving to God are our first commitment, followed by prayer of penance then prayer of supplication. Our supplication, of course, should include asking the Lord to bring this current health crisis under control, and finally to eliminate it altogether. Although we won't be gathered together physically, let us gather together in our spirits to ask for this favour of the God who loves us. Where two or three are gathered together in my name. I am there among them (Matt 18:20).





Most Reverend Julian Porteous, DD
Archbishop of Hobart

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Living the Paschal Mystery in 2020

A Pastoral Letter to the Catholic People of Tasmania

Holy Week is upon us, the most sacred week of the Christian liturgical year. This Easter will be a very different experience for all of us. Many faithful Catholics have come to embrace the liturgical journey over the Sacred Triduum as the spiritual climax of their year.

The spiritual journey of the Sacred Triduum

On Holy Thursday we join the Lord and his disciples at the Last Supper. The washing of the feet speaks eloquently of the call to Christian service. We are aware that this was the time when the Lord offered himself to us as the Eucharistic gift: "This is my body, which is for you" (I Cor 11:24). We go with the Lord to the Garden of Gethsemane as the Blessed Sacrament is taken in solemn procession to the Altar of Repose.

On Good Friday all seems subdued. There is a strange quiet. We attend the Stations of the Cross, walking with Jesus to Golgotha. Then in the afternoon we stand with Mary and John and the women at the foot of the cross. We venerate the cross as an act of personal gratitude for what Jesus has done for us.

Holy Saturday, the day when the Lord sleeps in death, has its own sacredness. We avoid doing much, awaiting the gathering around the Easter fire and celebrating with joy the Resurrection of the Lord. The Easter Vigil ceremony takes us through the Old Testament prophecies and promises to the singing of the Exultet and as the Gloria is triumphantly sung the lights come on and the bells are rung. The baptismal celebration reminds us that we have all risen to new life in Christ. The Easter Eucharist proclaims that the risen Lord is among us and comes to us as the living Bread of Life. Easter Sunday is replete with the joyful proclamation of the Alleluia, the Lord is risen as He said.

We have walked a journey through darkness and gloom to light and new life. It is a spiritual journey, touched with emotion. With the Easter Vigil Mass we are brought out of darkness into the marvellous light, spirits are lifted and we face life with a new sense of confidence in the Lord who has conquered sin and death.

Celebrating Easter in 2020

This year many Catholics across the world are distressed at being denied the opportunity to participate in the Easter liturgies at their parish church. However, the suffering evident across the world can draw us closer to the suffering of Christ which lie at the heart of the Church's commemoration. His own cry of anguish, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me" echoes the experience of those suffering the coronavirus. The Christian people stand at the foot of the cross, with Mary the Mother of God, united with Christ in his suffering and interceding for humanity. His death was the great act of redemption. In his final hours he prayed for forgiveness of humanity and offered Himself as the Lamb of Sacrifice.

This Easter we can live its mystery at a new level. Even if unable to participate liturgically in our churches, we can embrace the spiritual journey of the coming days. This year we can live the Easter mystery with a new awareness of human suffering and the power of a pandemic to cause the death of thousands and disrupt the entire world.

As we enter Holy Week let us all unite ourselves with the Paschal mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection which the Church solemnly celebrates.

I encourage those who can to participate in the live-streaming of the liturgy of Easter. For everyone the restrictions on our movements will mean that we are at home over the Sacred Triduum. I encourage people to see that this can offer the chance to have a three day retreat, devoted to prayer and reflection. On Friday morning I encourage you to say a private Stations of the Cross.

To parents I encourage you to bring the family together and enable your children live the story of Easter. There is an opportunity for the family to be a 'domestic church'.

Seeking forgiveness for our sins

For many, our personal preparation for the celebration of Holy Week is going to Confession, a culmination to the penitential season of Lent. This year the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is limited by restrictions imposed on our movements.

When granting a special indulgence for those affected by the virus and their families, and for health care workers, the Apostolic Penitentiary encouraged those seeking an indulgence to hold a crucifix. If unable to get to Confession this Easter we could hold a crucifix and say an Act of Contrition. The All Merciful God who sent His own Son to suffer and die for us, will grant such a sincere act of repentance.

This journey is captured in our liturgy which is ancient in its elements. We follow a pattern that has been followed by Christians over the centuries. We are united with a liturgical journey which has inspired Christians for millennia.

Aware of the world's suffering

This year our participation in the great acts of our redemption is different. The ceremonies which we have come to love and have participated in to our spiritual enrichment are taken from us. They will still be enacted in our church, but we cannot attend. We can watch them through live-streaming, but we will feel denied something which means so much to us.

We understand that this has become necessary because of the insidious danger of the spread of a virus which has already killed tens of thousands and will take the lives of many more in the weeks and months ahead.

Living in the midst of a world-wide pandemic is extremely challenging. Most of us have had no previous frame of reference for the kinds of restrictions that have been imposed. Even though we are arguably better equipped to deal with such a situation in Australia than in previous times, many will die and many more still will face extreme financial hardship. The worldwide impact of virus will be unlike anything most of us have known.

These moments of profound human suffering are times when faith is tested. Some will feel abandoned by God. Fear and uncertainty can threaten our trust and confidence in a loving and merciful God. As we witness places of great suffering like Italy and Spain, and now the United States, we are drawn to cry out to God for relief from such suffering and death.

The great sadness of this pandemic is that people are dying alone. Treated by health workers dressed in protective gear, they are denied having family around them in their last moments. Those of faith may not have had the ministrations of a priest. They are isolated and die alone. Some may not have a proper Christian burial.

The psalmist describes his desperate state as he says, "numbed, crushed and overcome, my heart groans, I moan aloud". In the midst of desperate suffering a prayer is raised to God: "Do not desert me, do not stand aside, my God! Come quickly to my help, Lord, my saviour". (Ps 38) Our prayer goes up to God in intercession for the suffering and in a heartfelt plea to be delivered from this pestilence. We pray particularly for those who will die alone.

Easter joy

On Good Friday a darkness descended on the earth. On Easter Sunday as the sun rose, so the Son of God rose triumphant from the grave. The Church's joyful proclamation that Christ is truly risen expresses our Christian belief that the love and mercy of God triumphs over all that is dark and evil.

On Easter Sunday let us lift our hearts in joyful praise of the One who has conquered death and offered us all eternal life.

Archbishop Julian Porteous