



*For all things give thanks.*

1 THESS 5:18

## **Bishop Brian Mascord's Pastoral Message for Easter 2020**

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Over the last few weeks, the world has become a lonelier and more insecure place. The freedom and joy of gathering with our loved ones has been reduced to a minimum. Our television screens are filled with disturbing news about the thousands around the world who have succumbed to the coronavirus. We fear for the wellbeing of our elderly people. Parents are anxious for their children's health and education, and children worry for the health of ageing parents. There is also the pain of those who have lost their jobs. What is worse, at a time when the sacred rites of our Christian faith should be a comfort to us, we are not able to pray together in our parish churches.

In this time of isolation and fear, I bring to you an Easter message of hope. On the Easter Sunday morning, as the Gospel of John relates, the world seemed a dark place for Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and the beloved disciple, but they gradually woke up to a new vision of life. They saw the tomb, empty. They observed the cloths that had wrapped the body of Jesus, and then they encountered the Risen Lord. From the darkness of unknowing and confusion, God brought light. Into the emptiness, God gave life. Instead of sorrow, God made their joy overflow. It was through the ordinariness of their own life experience, the Risen One was present to them.

The Risen Jesus is present to us through the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, God's love has been poured into our hearts and through this Spirit the promise of resurrection lives in us. This same Holy Spirit draws us together as the one Body of Christ and wherever Christian disciples live, serve and offer prayer to God, there is the Church.

As Jesus is present in our hearts and in our lives, he is also present in our homes. In that place of refuge and security, where we live and rest, whether we are alone or with our families and friends, Christ is there. With trust in the Risen Jesus, I invite you to pray with me as we ask God to bless our homes:

*Lord, we rejoice in the victory of your Son over death: by rising from the tomb to new life he gives us hope and the promise of everlasting life. Bless all the members of this household and surround them with your protection, that they may find comfort and peace in Jesus Christ, the Paschal Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Happy Easter everyone and may the Risen Lord who is present to you, fill your hearts with joy!

Yours in Christ

*+ Brian Mascord*

**Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD**

BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

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