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For all things give thanks.
1 THESS 5:18

Holy Week 2021

My Dear Colleagues and Friends

EASTER MESSAGE 2021 | from Bishop Brian Mascord

Fr Brendan Byrne SJ, an Australian Jesuit Scripture scholar, says “Just as a family will gather round on important occasions and tell and retell the family stories, so there is a sense in which the Church keeps its ‘best stories’ for this most significant celebration. These are the family stories that shape our identity as Christians: they tell us where we have come from, who we are and where we are going according to the saving plan of God.” They are our stories of hope.

When our Jewish brothers and sisters gather for the annual Passover Meal the youngest member of the family asks a very simple question, “Why is this night different to every other night?” When the Elder of the family answers the question, he does not speak in terms of “when” but rather he speaks in terms of actually participating in the event now. The Elders’ response is therefore in terms of something like, “This night God brought us out of Egypt and slavery to Pharaoh.”

The message for us at this time is very similar. We gather in this Easter time to tell and listen to the stories of God’s saving action in our lives now, for the Resurrection is a lived experience because of Jesus.

As we live in this time of Resurrection, I am very conscious that we are living in an experience of uncertainty. The last twelve months have called us to live in a manner of concern for others and not concentrating upon ourselves. We have been called to an outreach that moves us out of our comfort zones, and we are comforted by the words that have been spoken so often in the scriptures, “Do not be afraid” – the same words that Pope St John Paul II spoke at the time of his election as Pope.

We, as Church, are truly living in a time of transition. Some may feel that all is lost, but I am reminded of the words of one of the Prefaces of the Mass: “Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended.” We are like the disciples who looked for Jesus on the first Easter Sunday and instead found an empty tomb. At every turn it looks like a dead end, but the encounters with Jesus after the Resurrection call us to hope in the power of the Resurrection. In the midst of their confusion and unknowing, there is hope and we are called to tell the stories of this hope.

As we stand at the crossroads, so to speak, when our life as Church is changing, we are called to look to the pattern of dying and rising in the Church that is evident whenever we have eyes to see. God continually gives us the unexpected, as a sign of God’s presence. It is out of the ashes of our despair – a despair that has been evident throughout the last year because of the exile of Covid 19 – that we are being invited into the new life of God in this time and in this place. It is time for us to step into the Resurrection experience, an experience of the unknown, but in its fullness, an experience of life. It is here that we truly enter into the Paschal Mystery, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

I wish everyone the joy of a blessed and Holy Easter.

Yours in the Lord

+ Brian Mascord

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