



For all things give thanks.

1 THESS 5:18

The Light That Cannot Be Overcome

PASTORAL LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL
FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC EVENTS AT BONDI

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with a heart full of sadness that I write to you in the wake of the tragic events that have unfolded in Bondi on Sunday afternoon. In this season of Advent, a time when we prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of our Saviour, this terrible event weighs heavily on us all. We find ourselves burdened with grief and questions in the face of this senseless loss of life and the pain inflicted on so many. The killings that took place last Sunday in Bondi are a painful reminder of the reality of violence, hatred and fear, all of which were directed at our Jewish brothers and sisters here in Australia and therefore directed at all of us. Pope Leo XIV has cried out “Enough of these forms of antisemitic violence”. This is a cry that we all should be making as people of faith, a people of peace and a people who are called to honour the dignity of every human being. A people who are called to love.

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we hear the Gospel proclaim the story of Mary and Joseph, who, amidst their own fears and uncertainties, trusted in the promises of God. The angel’s words to Joseph, “Do not be afraid” (Matthew 1:20), echo across the centuries to us now. These words are a reminder that God is ever with us, even in the darkest of moments, Emmanuel, God with us, dwells among us, bringing light into our shadows and hope into our despair.

Advent is a season of waiting, yearning, and hoping. It is a time when we are reminded that God, entered into a violent broken world, not with a display of aggression, but rather with the vulnerability of a child. In Jesus the wisdom of the world is subverted, and we find not only the answer to our eternal longing but the courage to choose hope amidst the challenges of the here and now.

In this time of grief, we are called to reject further division and hate, and to embody the forgiveness and love that Advent heralds. Just as Mary’s quiet “yes” to God changed the course of history, we are invited to say “yes” to being instruments of peace, healing,

and reconciliation. Let us open our hearts to those who are most affected by this tragedy, those who are grieving, those who are injured, and even those whose actions have caused such harm. As a community of faith, we are called to be a sign of God’s mercy, to stand in solidarity with the suffering, and to proclaim through our actions that no darkness can overcome the light of Christ (John 1:5).

As we approach Christmas, let us draw strength from the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and Reconciliation, where we encounter Christ, the source of all hope and consolation. Let us bring our grief, our questions, and our fears to God, trusting in God’s infinite mercy and love. Let us also take comfort in the knowledge that God is always close to the broken-hearted (Psalm 34:18).

I encourage you to spend time in prayer with your families and in your parish communities during this final week of Advent. As we light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath, may its light remind us of the enduring hope we have in the coming of Christ, who is the Prince of Peace. May we, like Mary and Joseph, trust in God’s plan and allow His love to guide us through this difficult time.

As your shepherd, I assure you of my continued prayers for you. I ask that you pray for me, for one another, for our Jewish brothers and sisters, and for peace in our world. Let us walk together in faith, hope, and love, as we look forward to the joy of Christ’s birth and the promise of His abiding presence among us. The presence of love.

Yours in Christ

+Brian Mascord

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