



**FATHER ANTON'S WORD'S OF WISDOM:** To say that the last few weeks have been a bit unusual would be an understatement, but united with Christ we can endure and overcome.

Easter is just around the corner and the events of Christ's life and of His passion remind us that life is about experiencing the resurrection in our everyday lives. We have had to die to many things over the last while and we will rise from them better and with a greater understanding of what life is all about.

In our fast paced world many have been working many more hours than they should in the pursuit of obtaining all those material things that they thought would make them happy. This Pandemic has taught us that all of these things pass and only one thing remains....life.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He is hailed as King, and as events unfold, at the end of this journey He is killed and mocked by many of the same folks who welcomed Him with palm branches. Jesus witnesses the weakness of humanity when it is faced with fear. His apostle's for the most part abandon Him. When He needs them most they are not there. They fell asleep in Gethsemane, and denied even knowing Him. At the foot of the cross were only His mother, and John. Knowing their weaknesses and the ignorance of those who put Him to death, and He cried out "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." But what was thought to be an end by most who knew Him was actually a new beginning! He rose from the dead and dwelling among His disciples until His ascension He continues to teach. Finally, when leaving to take His place with His Father, He promises "and know that I am with you, even unto the end of the world."

This Pandemic has gripped us with uncertainty, we can see things changing... people seem to be more understanding. Families are spending more time together. Neighbour is helping neighbour. People are contemplating and reevaluating their lives and their priorities. The faithful are learning how to pray at home, and still be connected to their faith. The Church is learning how to reach out more with the tools that are available, especially social media. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, we are dying to old ways and rising to a new vision of life and the world.

Every day, as Christians we are called to die to those things within ourselves that dim the light of Christ. We are challenged to protect the light of Christ within us so that it may shine brightly for all to see. We die to selfish desires that we may rise to be aware of those who are less fortunate. We die to hatred and rise to understand that the only true path is love. We die to prejudice and oppression rising to understand that all are God's children and they are our brothers and sisters. We die to the belief that the more we have materially, the happier we will be, and rise to understand that these "things" pass and that our happiness is not tied to what we have, but rather who we are.

This Easter is challenging. We will not be gathering in our Churches to celebrate Holy Week and Easter, but that does not mean "Easter is cancelled." The miracle of the resurrection is what prompted the early Christians to gather in "Home Churches" and we have the opportunity to experience our faith and the miracle of Easter more intimately with our families in our homes. We can pray together and celebrate. We can connect with our parish family by participating in the many Holy Week and Easter services that will be streamed on line by our parish.

In the end, as this Pandemic comes to an end, life will have changed. We will be an Easter people! We will live in the knowledge of the presence of the Risen Christ every day of our lives and will better understand How God was speaking to us in these times; a message to slow down that we might hear Him speak. A lesson that life isn't always about what we have materially, but who we have and who we are.

Yes Easter is about good that came from bad...that's why we say "Good" Friday. From Christ's sacrifice on the Cross we were saved! All our weakness, failures, worries; cares were nailed to the Cross and died once and for all! And yes, the Pandemic is also about good that comes from bad. We are learning to live life with more gratefulness; to be happy with less; to reach out to our neighbour; to understand compassion; to die to all those things that dim the "Light" that we might shine now more brightly in a world that was on a dangerous course of losing our identity as God's children and living only for ourselves.

My prayer for all of you this Easter is: May the Risen Christ fill your hearts with joy and contentment. May His light shine for you and in you, that you may be the light that fills the darkness and shadows of the world. May you walk in the light, and with the light, and shine so brightly that others may ask the source of it, and that you may answer: Jesus risen from the dead and with me always.

God bless all of you...with my love and prayers – Father Anton