



The See of Ebbsfleet

**From the Bishop**

*Easter 2020*

## **Christ is truly risen! Alleluia!**

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

This Holy Week and the fifty days leading to Pentecost will be an Eastertide like none before it. Our necessary isolation from one another will undoubtedly save lives and help the health services cope, so we must somehow *thank* God for it. But it will nonetheless feel like we've extended Lent, like an extra-long retreat, into Easter. Then again, monks and nuns understand how to be joyful in isolation so why shouldn't we all?

I want personally to thank you for all you are doing to serve others; helping to provide for other peoples' needs, by whatever means you can, while the tragic scourge of coronavirus is among us. Please preserve your own health: God gave you it, and gave it to others too.

We shouldn't think of Easter this year as an antidote or cure for the seeping fear and strangeness of all we're going through together. If it were it would simply fall flat, or seem unbelievable, and we would rightly be, as St Paul says, 'the *most* miserable of men and women'. But it *isn't* simply a bit of the Jesus story, which comes round like a well-rehearsed play every year. Easter is, we know, in fact the actual *normal* state of life for those of us who believe, and makes us citizens of two worlds: this one, where even love *cannot* stop death, and the eternal one we're baptized into, in which death *can* never quench love.

We should therefore not behave as those who have no hope. In the resurrection of his Son, God our Father lifts our eyes to an eternal and joy-filled horizon, and fills us with confidence. May he renew in us then all the gifts of his Son's resurrection; and breathe his Spirit on us; may he give us all the long view in our present difficulties, large-mindedness and generosity in our use of material goods, patience and perseverance at all times, and that special gift of God we call the gift of hope.

### EASTER

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen.

Sing his praise  
without delays,

Who takes thee by the hand,  
that thou likewise  
with him mayst rise:

That, as his death calcined thee to dust,  
His life may make thee gold, and much more, just.

George Herbert, from *The Temple* (1633)

May the Lord bless you with a blessed and unexpectedly joy-filled Easter!

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