

 SURFERS PARADISE CATHOLIC PARISH	All Churches closed until further notice.
	Office phone contact hours: 9am-12noon
	Emergencies – priest contactable 24/7 via emergency prompt on the parish main phone line Phone (07) 5572 5433
	Fax: (07) 5572 5262 50 Fairway Drive, Clear Island Waters, QLD 4226

SURFERS PARADISE E-NEWSLETTER

(Edition 3)

Sacred Triduum and Easter

Date: 12th April, 2020.

Here are some wonderful photos from parishioners who have marked Holy Week in their own homes with what they have at hand, in the absence of gathered Masses, with home symbols and special prayer spaces. God bless you all.





(This morning -Friday 10th April, - on the ABC-tv News Breakfast programme, Fr Peter was featured briefly in an interview from the church about Holy Week and Easter during the pandemic - Please see - <https://twitter.com/BreakfastNews/status/1248368771779059714?s=20>).

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Technical problems prevented this being released as scheduled.

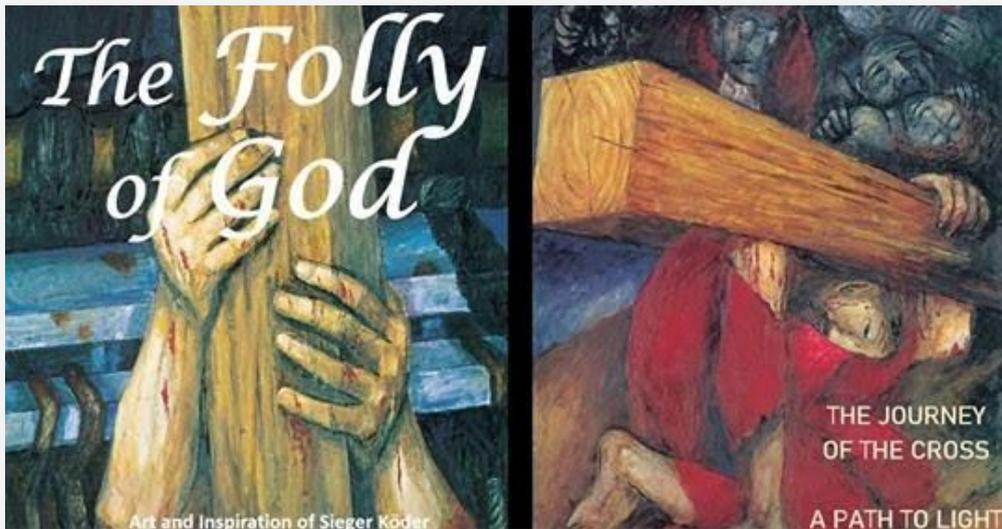
It is still very fitting for contemplation on Holy Saturday morning.

The Audio-Visual presentation of the Stations of the Cross, (From Surfers Paradise Parishioners), is now available via the very accessible Youtube.

Here is the Link:

https://youtu.be/E31C7_HePt8

[Contributions by Parishioners of the Surfers Paradise Catholic Parish and arranged by Robyn Hunt and Fr Paul Kelly](#)



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A Message from Surfers

Tales of the Unexpected.

Last week I overheard a conversation in a medical centre waiting room, (I wasn't eavesdropping, it was impossible not to hear), the thrust of which was how lonely, confused, disillusioned and mistrustful we have become during this present health crisis. The conversation was a little 'earlier' than the words I have used, but that was what I, and other patients, took from the conversation/lecture. It could be summed up as an angry tirade about how "somebody should be doing something to fix this situation up quick smart".

Everyone seemed to be in the firing line and I soon feared for the doctor who was about to see this patient, who may well have copped a spray for not providing a miracle cure at bulk-billing prices.

But there's more; this developed into a broader discussion/monologue on how people who don't obey the health directives of doctors and politicians "should be shot" (exact words). Fortunately we haven't arrived at that desperate solution, but it does highlight a temptation to, a) think that other people should be doing more and b) that drastic times call for more drastic measures. While there is a certain element of truth in that, the unchecked result can be that we become suspicious and resentful of others and that we start to believe that personal responsibility counts for little and that morality in general is fading into obscurity.

Part of this angst was surely coming from the removal of choices and freedoms that we have so often taken for granted. I was thinking, at the time, of several, but not

large numbers, of people asking what we as a parish will be doing to make “Easter happen”. Clearly the closing of our churches is disappointing, but it is nobody's fault and no one has a greater ownership of disappointment than anyone else. I'm personally gratified to know that we are all in this together, that no one person or community has been singled out for special restrictions and that we are now imaginatively looking at new ways for new and challenging times.

In an excellent article by Rabbi Lord Jonathon Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Commonwealth, said that morality is our default mode. We are made to compete, but we are also made to cooperate. We need one another. We care about one another.

When we behave towards others with care and concern, sensitivity and tact, honesty and integrity, generosity and grace, forbearance and forgiveness, we start to become a different person.

While it might have been tempting to seek some solace in the venting about others, in the absence of clear answers and outcomes, why do we always opt to blame someone or something? Is it that we feel so helpless in not being able to bring about changes ourselves? Bad behaviour and poor attitudes can become contagious, but so can good behaviour, and it usually wins in the long run. We feel uplifted by people who care about other people.

Cowardice and lack of time stopped me from intruding on the increasingly loud interaction in the waiting room, but I did realise how in times of illness and tension, be it personal or communal, we raise even more barriers and try to protect ourselves from an enemy we cannot see or hear. We tend to think that if we go down, then others should go down as well and that we are in no way to blame.

In these trying times we need to recognise more than ever that morality matters. Not because we seek to be judgemental or self-righteous or pious. It matters because we cherish relationships, and believe that love, friendship, work and even casual encounters with strangers matter, because they are so central to our being, that we seek to endow them with such a permanence as is given to us in this unpredictable and transitory life.

Civility, personal responsibility and recognising that we live in an “I-Thou” world rather than an “I-It” community, should be especially clear in our minds these days and that, above all, we should remember, that we are worth what we are willing to share with others.

It was almost a disappointment when the time came for my consultation with the doctor. I had been learning so much from the ratings of my fellow patient, while

waiting for my turn. I wondered later if I should have asked the “herald of doom” if she accepted Medicare since she was responsible for so much amusement and pessimistic insight. I left the medical centre healed and hopeful that brighter days are coming.

Fr. Peter Dillon PP.

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Did you see us on Channel Seven News, Gold Coast, on Tuesday Night (7.4.20) Here is the news article on our preparations for a different kind of Holy Week and Easter:

<https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSGoldCoast/videos/212441206839979/>

(if you are having trouble viewing the news article from the above link, an off-tv recording is featured here. (quality variable).

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-23BW3TGV_rLOot_7NBWdTtre3RwfOsd

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Please Pray:

IN OUR HEARTS AND PRAYERS AT THIS TIME

FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

All suffering from the effects of Covid-19.

Also, the following who are ill (**not** covid-19): Monica Bailey, Rachel Raines, Ron Perry, Ray Gardiner, Savannah Ayoub, Lisa Mangan, Colin Virtue, Ann Harris, Ann-Marie Loder, Angel Salvador, Brian Woodgate, Kate Smith, Tricia Baumann, Gus Reeves, Baby Maeve Lombard, Kathy Kiely, Brian Ellsmore, Greg Sharah, Sr. Christine Chia, Kurt and Betty Hilleshiem, Judy Ferraro, Kim Parkes, Rosslyn Wallis, Jabour Haddad, Yvonne Lofthouse, Maureen Murphy, Helen Bohringer, Peter Walsh, Arthur Haddad, Jean Di Benedetto, Damian Callinan, Patricia Bridge Wienand, Rosemary Wales, Peter Allsopp, Yvonne Campesi, Louis Couch, Steve Wayt, Michael Tracey, Joanne Mooney, Joanne Parkes, Peter O'Brien, Michelle MacDonald, John & Molly Robinson, Mary Kerr, Eileen McCarthy.

RECENTLY DECEASED: Frank Conway (Hobart, Father of Liz Dickson), Noreen Flynn (Mother of Trish Fearnley), Miriam Zarb, Jessie Veronica Dolan, Tony McLeod, Pamela B. Braithwaite, Sylvio Devito, James Vincent (Jim) Daly, Vizma Barrett, Giovanni Scalcione, Giorgia Teresa Vinall, Michael Geoghegan, Fr Peter Conroy (former PP of Yeronga), Sunta Camilleri (Malta), Manuel Dos Santos, Norman Loong, Frank Maunder, Dr Gavin Carroll, Margaret Maunsell, Norah Horgan, Brenda Sinnott.

ANNIVERSARY: John Richard Morgan, Elsie Wall, Ian Berman; Sylvia Goodwin, Ricardo Herft, Bernadette Bartley, Annunziata Morabito, Halam and Amelia Japow, Peter Schreck.

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First Sunday of Lent ¶

1st March 2020 ¶





¶ Shirley, 36, is an indigenous Manide woman living in a remote province in the Philippines. Shirley was struggling to support her family and keep their children in school. She faced regular discrimination and disadvantage, limiting her family's access to food, education, employment and healthcare. With Caritas Australia's support, Shirley trained to become an indigenous health worker. She has learnt to supplement her income and is able to feed her family. The program has also empowered Shirley to send her children to school. ¶

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to help people like Shirley, and her children gain confidence and respect within their community.

Let's Go Further, Together. You can donate by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

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Palm Sunday mass celebrated by Pope Francis behind closed doors without believers due to the coronavirus pandemic on 5 April 2020. (see full article later in this e-bulletin).

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The Catholic Leader Newspaper, dated 12th April 2020, the digital edition is now available [here](#)

The flipbook is downloadable in PDF and printable. First, enter full-screen mode by clicking the 'full-screen' button in the centre of the pages. Using the icons above the

newspaper, you can select print or download. Please find instructions attached or watch [this video](#) for a step-by-step guide.

The Catholic Leader digital editions are full of interactive features and we encourage you to explore the links and videos on offer. To find out what sections are interactive, simply hover over an image or link if it highlights with a grey box, click away for more information.

Enjoy! Also please see Catholic Leader Archdiocesan Newspaper:

<https://catholicleader.com.au/>

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Parish Financial Support.

Speaking of giving,

A NEW WAY TO PARISH GIVING

This week the Archdiocese of Brisbane provided a few select parishes with an exciting new way to donate to your parish.

Web-link:

Parishgiving.brisbanecatholic.org.au

The first time you will need to set up with your email and create a password.



The second page requires your details and then click on the Register. You will only need to Register once. All subsequent visits you will Log In.

The image shows a registration form for Parish Giving Queensland. The form is set against a purple background. At the top, there is a logo consisting of a white circle with a stylized 'G' inside, followed by the text 'PARISH GIVING' and 'Queensland' with a small downward arrow. Below this is a purple button labeled 'Register'. The form fields are as follows:

- Full Name *
- Phone *
- Address Line 1
- Address Line 2
- City
- State:
- Post Code
- Country
- Email * (with an envelope icon)
- Password * (with a lock icon)
- Confirm Password * (with a lock icon)

At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: 'Register' and 'Log In'. Below the form, there are two logos: 'Supported By' with the 'ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE' logo and 'Powered By' with the 'webgate' logo.

Two actions on this page.

- Allowing your location
- Selecting **Surfers Paradise Catholic Parish**

create a gift:



SCROLL DOWN

Select Amount

Choose a Card

Select Give One Time or

Make a Recurring Gift

Personal Giving Note (planned giving number or name)

Create a Gift

Surfers Paradise Parish
50 Fairway Dr, Clear Island Waters, QLD
Australia - 4226

Amount: _____ Choose a Card: _____ + Add Card

Give One Time Make a Recurring Gift

Personal Giving Note: _____

Close Submit

At this time, we ask that you prayerfully consider making weekly or monthly donations to your parish via internet banking. The cost of running our large parish consumes almost 100 per cent of the regular weekly collection. As our masses are indefinitely suspended, this will place our parish in a very difficult position financially. Our appeal to you is if you have been blessed with the resources to give to the parish at this time, please consider donating regularly.

Our parish has been incredibly supported by its very generous parishioners over the years and this is a time where your prayerful and financial support is most in need.

Yours faithfully, Sonya Slater,

Parish Manager Surfers Paradise Catholic Parish Commonwealth
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Some Images of Sacred Heart Church whilst we are in lockdown:



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Centacare Family & Relationship Services - Update on our response to COVID-19

As part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Centacare Family and Relationship Services is monitoring the development of COVID-19 closely.

We have plans in place to support the safety, health and wellbeing of clients and employees, and will continue to follow the advice of public health authorities. To date, Centacare Family and Relationship Services has been able to deliver all services as usual.

To ensure business continuity, we have developed a COVID-19 client triage process which balances the need for ongoing provision of essential services along with necessary steps required to support the health and wellbeing of staff and the community.

Until we receive further advice from Government Health Authorities the following changes will be in place from Monday, 23 March 2020:

Telephone will be the primary mode of service delivery for the majority of services. Outreach services are temporarily suspended and any ongoing services will be run from our primary location in the region.

The needs of clients with complex, special needs and/or who are at high risk, and the needs of new clients who are in crisis or present with imminent risk, will be considered on a case by case basis. We will determine the mode of service delivery that is in the client's best interests. In some cases, it may still be appropriate to offer face to face support, using the recommended health and safety precautions.

We look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders, for the benefit of the families and communities we work with. **For Centacare inquiries:**

Email: cfrs.cgc@bne.centacare.net.au www.centacarebrisbane.net.au.

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A special thank you and blessings and prayers to the medical teams making a huge difference in our communities near and far. God's healing work is being experienced through them. We pray too for the emergency services and all who are showing care, leadership and practical assistance at this time. God bless and sustain your tireless work.

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Our very own mass communities have become caring communities by regularly contacting those known to them, not only those who live alone and are isolated, but all families who are known to them, to just say 'hello, how are you today?' - Well done to the entire Surfers Paradise Parish community.

Anyone in need of extra support via a phone-call? Please contact us at surfers@bne.catholic.net.au

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Just a reminder that, in line with health guidelines, we are recommending people limit contact with others as much as possible. And so the office is not open for pop-in visits. The parish has phone contact hours Mon-Fri 9-12 noon, where we will endeavour to answer the phone for any inquiries. After these hours there is the same number with a button option to press for emergency contact for the on-call priest. We are also contactable by email. The less face-to-face contact in these times of pandemic, the quicker we hope this situation can return to “normal.” Phone 5572 5433.

surfers@bne.catholic.net.au

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It is so important for the good of all the community and every member of it that we do take special time at home to praise God and listen to his word, particularly on Sunday, (or Saturday evening), and especially at this time when public masses and gatherings cannot occur. Bless you all.

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Religious Goods Shop. Items. This is an excellent time to deepen our spiritual reading, prayer and reflection. If people are looking to purchase some items from our piety collection in the Surfers Paradise Parish, in these times when spiritual reading and prayer is not only necessary but also very beneficial, Pat Kelly is happy to be of assistance if possible. The physical piety store is not open, but Pat can be of help. Please contact her by email:

svcoordinator40@gmail.com

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Please ensure that you keep up with updates on our parish website:

<https://www.surfersparadiseparish.com.au/>

Parish Email: surfers@bne.catholic.net.au

Liturgy for you at Home (From Surfers Paradise):

<https://soundcloud.com/user-633212303/tracks>

Weekly Homily:

<https://homilycatholic.blogspot.com>

Breaking News (Parish):

<https://news-parish.blogspot.com/>

Parish Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/surferscatholic/>

The Catholic Leader Archdiocesan Newspaper:

<https://catholicleader.com.au/>

Livestream of Catholic Mass from Brisbane Cathedral:
[St Stephens Cathedral live webcast \(usually around 10am\)](#)

Video on Demand of Masses:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CatholicBrisbane/videos>

Mass for You at Home (free-to-air TV)

Channel 10 Sundays 6am-6.30pm

and also on demand <https://10play.com.au/mass-for-you-at-home>

also on Foxtel 173 Aurora Channel

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Channel Seven Free-to-Air Broadcast from St Mary's Sydney.

Another free-to-air option for Easter participation. Please let others know who are not on the net.

Catholics around Australia will be able to watch Easter services live on national television from St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney.

In a 7NEWS special, the network will stream The Lord's Passion at 3pm on Good Friday and Easter Sunday Mass from 10.30am across the country on Channel 7, Prime 7 in regional areas, and live-streamed on 7plus. (Our apologies, earlier we had thought they were also broadcasting Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday, but that is not the case. Those ceremonies can be seen live-streamed from the Brisbane Archdiocese website).

Both liturgies will be broadcast commercial-free and in their entirety.

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP of Sydney, welcomed the partnership, saying he was grateful to the network for recognising the importance to Catholics in the commemoration of Good Friday and the celebration of Easter Sunday Mass.

"These national broadcasts mean people of all ages and no matter where they live or are currently isolating, will now be able to participate in the Mass," Archbishop Fisher said.

"I know it will be especially welcome news to those living in nursing homes and aged care facilities who will especially be feeling the sting of separation from family over

Easter, due to the restrictions on visits, and whose connection to their faith remains strong.

“All Australians are experiencing hardship at this time as we seek to limit the spread of the Coronavirus and many people are being asked to make great sacrifices such as our health professionals working long hours and risking their own health.

“Another sacrifice for people of faith is being unable to gather physically to celebrate the sacraments or even to spend time praying in a church. But by televising these services, it means we can spiritually come together to maintain our life of prayer and worship and strengthen our communion with one another.”

Network 10 broadcasts Mass for You at Home each Sunday at 6am. But aside from rare occasions such as the papal visits of popes Paul VI in 1970, John Paul II in 1986 and Benedict XVI for World Youth Day 2008, the live broadcast of Easter services on a national network in Australia is unprecedented.

“... BY TELEVISIONING THESE SERVICES, IT MEANS WE CAN SPIRITUALLY COME TOGETHER”

Director of 7NEWS Sydney, Jason Morrison, said that Easter is the most sacred time of the year on the liturgical calendar.

“With public gatherings and church services currently closed in response to the pandemic, the 7NEWS team is proud to help the Church to bring these important services to homes across the country,” Mr Morrison said.

Those wanting to view the liturgies online can visit <https://7plus.com.au/>.

The cathedral continues to live-stream Mass daily at 9am and each Sunday at 10.30am at www.stmaryscathedral.org.au . It will also live-stream Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 6.30pm on April 9 and The Stations of the Cross at 10am on Good Friday, April 10 as well as The Lord’s Passion liturgy and Easter Sunday Mass.

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Celebrating HOLY WEEK and EASTER - AT HOME – 2020 -

For Prayer and Reflection at home During Holy Week:

Please share these resources widely.

These resources have been produced by Liturgy Brisbane to enable families to celebrate simple liturgies at home for Holy Week.

Holy Week At Home

[Holy Thursday](#)

[Good Friday](#)

[Easter Sunday](#)

"Australia was founded at a time when the Mass could not be celebrated on these shores. Following the most recent advice from the commonwealth and state governments, it may seem that we are again in that situation. But where our forefathers and mothers waited for years to receive the Holy Eucharist, it will be at worst a matter of months for us. But just as prayer sustained them through those times, so can it for us today. The spirit of those first Australian Catholics should inspire us through the times ahead." (Quote from Archdiocese of Sydney message).

We also have the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter in an audio-podcast created here in our parish. Also, the Cathedral in Brisbane will be streaming live the Liturgies at various times. Also, "Mass for You at Home" is broadcast on Channel 10 each Sunday from 6am. There are several live-streaming and on-demand services for daily Mass both locally and from around the English-speaking world.

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Let us remember the safety recommendations by the Health authorities: Stay home unless urgent. Observe the social spacing requirements.

Meetings ought to be replaced with phone calls, emails or other distance technology.

Funerals can only have a maximum of ten people in the building while also observing social spacing of four square metres.

Weddings (can only have five people including the couple, the priest and the two witnesses). and Baptisms, sacramental programs and other gatherings should be postponed.

Unfortunately, communion to the sick and the housebound is only to be given in extreme situations where the person is in imminent danger of death. This is to be conducted by the priest alone with the sacrament of Viaticum (the sacrament for the dying). Sadly we cannot give people hosts to take home with them. Communion to the sick and the housebound by special ministers is to be suspended until further notice.

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Are you or anyone you know not receiving and email with occasional updates direct to you? If not, please email Fr Paul at kellyp@bne.catholic.net.au and we will put you on the email list. Please note that some people had previously

given us emails but they have bounced or come back to us saying 'undeliverable.' We have tried to follow up on this but if you are in doubt, please email us and we will ensure you are on the list.

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The Liturgy (for you at home).

<https://homilycatholic.blogspot.com/>

Liturgy for you at Home (From Surfers Paradise):

<https://soundcloud.com/user-633212303/tracks>

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A Special Easter Message from Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of Brisbane.

A note from Archbishop Mark

Even before COVID-19 struck, people were becoming more anxious about the world. Perhaps it dates back to the shock of 9/11. We've grown used to greetings like, "Have a safe and happy Christmas" – safe always comes first. The world, it seems, is a dangerous place. But the current crisis has made it seem a whole lot more dangerous. It's not just a matter of an anxious twist to our greetings but of donning masks and even PPE. We work from home, behind closed doors and in front of the computer. We anxiously hope for a vaccine as soon as possible.

Yet however dangerous the world may be, fear is even more dangerous. It seeps in everywhere. Closed doors and PPE can't keep it out. It's the killer virus. But at Easter God offers the saving vaccine. We call it the resurrection. When the stone is rolled back from the tomb and Jesus rises from the dead, the virus of fear is finished and the vaccine of life is available to all, free of charge. Easter knows no season: it always goes to the heart of things. But at a time of crisis like this, Easter is more important than ever. It's a matter of life and death. A safe and peaceful Easter to you all.

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**A Special Message shared by Bishop Ken Howell, Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane.
(And former parish priest of Burleigh Parish).**

Dear Colleagues,

The coming of Easter this year will allow us to see our lives and the world in which we live in a very different light. Please take time in these precious days to focus on that which is truly important and life-giving. Many will see their families and loved ones in a new and richer light. This is a blessing!

This last week, I've been reminded of the resilience of those in our parishes, Centacare and throughout the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Employees continue to rise to the occasion by finding new and creative ways to provide essential services to vulnerable members of the community.

Some of you are packing care boxes of groceries for seafarers unable to get off their boats after months at sea, some are helping the elderly learn to use technology so they can stay connected and others are calling older parishioners who are isolated in their homes to ease their loneliness. Archdiocesan employees, through small acts of kindness, are blessing people's lives to help them through this time.

Another group of employees have launched a new community-wide *Small Blessings Campaign* this week which invites us to focus on gratitude and think about the small blessings we have experienced during this past month. You can find out more about the campaign and share your [‘small blessing’ here](#).

I encourage you to connect with your colleagues and the community through this campaign by sharing the small blessings that you've experienced. It becomes a way of remembering the good works that we're surrounded by and may provide inspiration to care for one another during a time of anxiety.

Please find some additional updates below.

- The Australian Government and Beyond Blue have launched a **Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service** available to support all Australians to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental health and wellbeing. [Click here for more information](#).
- **Maintaining Social Connection while Maintaining Social Distance** – A reflection from Paul Jensen, Director of Mission and Formation at Centacare. [Click here](#).

In the midst of all that the Coronavirus has been, there is an uncertain future that lies ahead. Faith always leads us to the heart of whatever is dark and shines reassuring light into doubt and pain. May this hope-filled light shine brightly for you and your loved ones

this Easter. May the Risen Christ guide each and every one of us towards hope and strength in God's promises.

+Ken

Bishop Ken Howell

Auxiliary Bishop - Brisbane

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07 APRIL 2020, THE TABLET

The Pope's message of hope for a world in lockdown

by [Christopher Lamb](#)



Palm Sunday mass celebrated by Pope Francis behind closed doors without believers due to the coronavirus pandemic on 5 April 2020.

Mondadori Portfolio/SIPA USA/PA Images

Pope Francis has offered a powerful message of hope during the coronavirus pandemic, in his [first ever interview with a British journalist](#).

He believes the Covid-19 pandemic is a "place of conversion", a chance we must not let slip away.

And he says the Church will come out of the Covid-19 crisis with its institutions reconfigured according to the spirit of early Christianity, and less attached to "certain ways" of thinking.

Francis was speaking to papal biographer Austen Ivereigh in an interview published exclusively by The Tablet and Commonweal. It is the pope's first English language interview with Catholic media and his first with a British journalist.

He focuses on his response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

"What we are living now is a place of conversion, and we have the chance to begin. So let's not let it slip from us, and let's move ahead," he says.

We have to respond to confinement with creativity. "We can either get depressed and alienated – through media that can take us out of our reality – or we can get creative."

He explains what he means by conversion: "Go down into the underground, and pass from the hyper-virtual, fleshless world to the suffering flesh of the poor. This is the conversion we have to undergo. And if we don't start there, there will be no conversion."

The pope sent a recorded audio reply to a series of questions, and in one of them Dr Ivereigh asks if the 83-year-old Roman pontiff sees the future of the Church as "less attached" to institutions.

"Less attached to institutions? I'd say less attached to certain ways of thinking," Francis, 83, replies.

"We have to learn to live in a Church that exists in the tension between harmony and disorder provoked by the Holy Spirit. If you ask me which book of theology can best help you understand this, it would be the Acts of the Apostles. There you will see how the Holy Spirit de-institutionalises what is no longer of use, and institutionalises the future of the Church. That is the Church that needs to come out of the crisis."

He defends the Church as an institution. "A Church that is free is not an anarchic Church, because freedom is God's gift. An institutional Church means a Church institutionalised by the Holy Spirit."

Covid-19 has led to closures of church buildings and the suspension of liturgies, forcing Catholics to worship at home or follow live-streamed Masses. It has led to comparisons with the early centuries of the church when Christians gathered in their homes to pray.

During the interview, the pope talked about an Italian bishop who had called him "flustered" because he wanted to give a general absolution – forgiveness of sins without individual confession – from the hallway of a hospital to patients in their wards.

"He had spoken to canon lawyers who had told him he couldn't, that absolution could only be given in direct contact. 'What do you think, Father?' he had asked me," the pope explained. "I told him: 'Bishop, fulfil your priestly duty.' And the bishop said 'Grazie, ho capito' ('Thank you, I understand'). I found out later that he was giving absolution all around the place".

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Vatican has given special permission for general absolution to be given to people unable to access a priest for fear of contagion, while Francis has encouraged individual believers to confess their sins [directly to God](#). "This is the freedom of the Spirit in the midst of a crisis, not a Church closed off in institutions," the pope explains in the interview. "That doesn't mean that canon law is not important: it is, it helps, and please let's make good use of it, it is for our good".

Francis reflects in the interview on the economic impact of the lockdowns put in place to stop the spread of the coronavirus, and how governments have responded to the crisis. The Pope says the virus has revealed how "all our thinking, like it or not, has been shaped around the economy" and that in "the world of finance it has seemed normal to sacrifice [people], to practise a politics of the throwaway culture, from the beginning to the end of life."

He says the "throwaway culture" brought to mind Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which controversially reasserted the Church's ban on the use of artificial contraception. Francis argues the encyclical was prophetic for predicting future attempts to control the size of the human population.

The pope explains at the beginning of the discussion that during the lockdown the Roman Curia is working in shifts in order to keep running, and in his Casa Santa Marta residence the community are sticking to the measures ordered by health authorities.

Given his age, the pope is vulnerable were he to catch the highly infectious bug. One resident of the Casa Santa Marta has already tested positive for Covid-19 and the Vatican has seven cases of those with the virus. Although Francis came down with a protracted cold last month, he has tested negative for the virus.

"Here in the Santa Marta residence we now have two shifts for meals, which helps a lot to alleviate the impact," he explained. "Everyone works in his office or from his room, using technology. Everyone is working; there are no idlers here."

The Vatican, he says, is trying to plan the "tragic and painful" aftermath of the crisis. Francis points to those suffering financially as a result of Covid-19 as the "new deprived" and looking to the future cites Virgil's "Aeneid" when Aeneas suffers a devastating defeat at Troy. Two paths open up for Aeneas, the pope explains: "to remain there to weep and end his life" or to follow "his heart", make for the mountain and end the war.

"So: to be in lockdown, but yearning, with that memory that yearns and begets hope – this is what will help us escape our confinement," he says.

In an interview with [Thinking Faith](#), Austen Ivereigh explains how he achieved the interview.

He says: "It was the last week of March, and the world was in lockdown. I had reached out to Francis on impulse: the virus crisis was now hitting the English-speaking world hard, and I felt we needed to hear from him."

Ivereigh adds: "What the interview shows is that we are not just passive spectators in this process, but its agents; it is our choices that will condition the future that is being incubated."

The pope is thinking, he says, of how to accompany the people of God at this time. Lockdown imposes isolation, distance, solitude: the question is how to break through these walls.

[Read the full interview that Pope Francis gave to Austen Ivereigh.](#) ++++