



Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

123 Nelson Rd
Saskatoon SK S7S 1H1
www.rcdos.ca

Phone: 306-242-1500
Fax: 306-244-6010
Toll free: 877-661-5005



Holy Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Greetings Clergy, Religious and People of God of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

We celebrate the upcoming Holy Week and Easter Season in extraordinary times! The circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new sense of vulnerability and tragedy to our world. Yet we enter into a profoundly meaningful time in the life of our faith, as we recall our Lord Jesus's journey to Jerusalem in which He personally meets the tragedy and seeming finality of human limitation and especially death. However, the Saviour's response also reminds us of the way that we can respond to the human propensity towards 'fatal attractions.' The Saviour's response is one of complete self-giving and the outpouring of his life. For sure, the greatest love the world has ever known is that which we witness on that terrible day we know as 'Good Friday.'

But after the Friday, Easter Sunday comes! Jesus, after having faced the totality of human death...rises!! Our Lord confronts and takes on absolutely anything that can come between us and the saving love of God, the Creator of the world. The journey from Good Friday to Easter Sunday is the ultimate testimony that God did not will that sin and death would come to the world – and God is the only One who does something about it. Otherwise death would be the final story. As Our Lord states, "I have come that you may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

We again recall with devotion and gratitude the journey that Jesus takes from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. His journey especially inspires to renew hope during the current crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic that is upon the world. As we all know, our world faces many other challenges as well. We face obstacles that at times seem insurmountable. Through all of this, Jesus continues to lovingly and faithfully look at us, saying "...for God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

May this Easter season be a time of hope and renewal. We pray that our Lord will bring healing to a terrible pandemic that afflicts the world. We pray for the healing of all who are sick – especially the elderly and infirm. We also pray for God's protection for all peoples that we rely on that are on the front lines of response – especially health care workers and other service providers.

May we also recommit to walking always with the Lord. He has risen from the dead, and has shown us the way from enslavement to freedom; from destructive anger or despair to healing; from death to life. As Pope Francis recently stated, let us always

 In all things we are *rooted in Christ*,
in His desire to bring God's love to all peoples.

remember how God is absolutely generous in sharing His richness. If this were not so we would not be here! As the Pope states:

[Let us put]....the paschal mystery at the centre of our lives. [This] means feeling compassion towards the wounds of the crucified Christ present in the many innocent victims of wars, in attacks on life, from that of the unborn to that of the elderly, and various forms of violence. They are likewise present in environmental disasters, the unequal distribution of the earth's goods, human trafficking in all its forms, and the unbridled thirst for profit, which is a form of idolatry. (cf Message of Pope Francis for Lent 2020)

Indeed, let us also allow God's hope to address *absolutely anything and everything* that comes between us and the love of God for all people and all the world. This starts by the daily commitment to the kind of humility and trust that the Saviour Himself shows the world on Good Friday.

May the Easter season be a time of healing and renewal for us all.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads '+ Mark Hagemoen'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross symbol at the beginning.

✠ Bishop Mark Hagemoen