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April 2, 2023  
Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

**Greetings Clergy, Religious, & People of God of the Diocese of Saskatoon:**


*Greetings to you all as we approach another Holy Week and Easter Season!* The long days of winter are finally giving way to somewhat warmer and certainly brighter days of Spring – a metaphor for the passage from Holy Week to the Easter event.

This last year has brought to our minds and hearts the awareness of the urgent need for *shalom* – restoration of right relationship – with God, with one another, with all creation, and within ourselves. As we all know, ultimately only God can give us this. In the words of our Saviour: *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled.”* [John 14:27]

Our Lenten journey in the wilderness with Jesus always features a renewed sense of vulnerability and brokenness. However, it brings the experience of blessings, much human kindness, and renewal.

In this year's Lenten message from Pope Francis, he reflects on the Transfiguration passage in the Gospel of Matthew. He describes this event as a unique and profound experience of an extraordinary spiritual encounter with God the Father and His son Jesus Christ on the mountain top. Lent is a time of extraordinary spiritual events and experiences given our spiritual pilgrimage of prayer, sacrifice, and service during the Lenten season. However, the Pope also invites us to go beyond the isolated spiritual experience to everyday life. As he states:

*On hearing the Father's voice, the disciples “fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and do not be afraid.’ And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone” (Mt 17:6-8). Here is [another] proposal for this Lent: do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events and dramatic experiences, out of fear of facing reality and its daily struggles, its hardships*

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

*and contradictions. The light that Jesus shows the disciples is an anticipation of Easter glory, and that must be the goal of our own journey, as we follow “Him alone.”*

Holy Week and the Easter season renew our awareness that nothing can come between us and the great love of God in Jesus Christ. The combination of desolation and strengthening that we experience in our Lenten journey assists us to *live life well* by not disengaging or withdrawing from the difficulties and challenges of current affairs. With God’s help, strength, and light, we can face and engage our current circumstances; bring hope to bear on futility; courage to bear on human weakness and failing; and light to bear on all darkness.

I take this opportunity to thank you all so very much for your support to me, showing what it means to strive to have the same mind and heart as that of Christ Jesus. May this season of celebrating Good Friday – followed by Easter Sunday – strengthen our resolution and solidarity to live the Paschal Mystery well together ... in Our Saviour!

*We adore you O Christ and we praise You, for by Your Holy Cross you redeemed and saved the world! In the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

Sincerely in Christ,



✠ Bishop Mark Hagemoen