



12 April 2020

Easter Pastoral Letter

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Kia tau te rangimārie kia koutou – Peace be with you

It was in the evening of the first Easter day, while the disciples were locked down in fear, that suddenly the risen Christ stood before them in the closed room and said, “Peace be with you” and showed them his hands and his side.

His greeting of peace is what we share with you on this Easter day knowing that Jesus has triumphed over the lockdown of the tomb and as the risen Christ stands among us, in lockdown, offering us his peace.

Our Easter, lived and celebrated in lockdown, has been one like we have never experienced before. We have felt the pain of not being able to celebrate together the Easter liturgies in our local churches. Some of you were looking forward to being baptised or received into the Church at Easter and this is yet to happen.

The future, for many, appears uncertain or even dire. In the meantime, we are continuing to have the tomb experience of being locked down at home and we know, for many families, that this situation is becoming difficult and stressful.

Despite these trials, many of you have connected with the events of the Easter days in new ways and gained new insights. We have been delighted to see how families and communities have been so innovative in praying at home and connecting to others through the phone or social media. Your living and sharing your faith in this time has been a source of inspiration and encouragement to many other people.

In the midst of this lockdown we, as a nation, have realised that we have been seduced by busyness, the pursuit of trivial things and of taking for granted the important things of life. People have enjoyed this slowing time. People have noticed families doing things together. The world has become quieter and we have noticed the beauty of nature. This time has proved to be a reflective time enabling us to refocus or revision ourselves and how we live.

This Easter, with Jesus, we have been offered the opportunity to die to self, and rise again to a new beginning. Our hope and prayer is that when we leave the tomb of

lockdown, we will work together as a community to build a better Church and society. Our hope is that we will all be stronger in our relationships with one another and in our appreciation of the gift of life. Our hope is for a society that is not driven by profiteering but works for the common good as we together rebuild our nation's economy. Our hope is that we will be a society that is more aware of the tangible presence of God who journeys with us on the paths of life. Our hope for the Church is that we will be more ardent in our faith, hope, love and service.

At Easter we journey from death to life. May your rising from this Easter and our time of lockdown be marked by the peace and joy of the risen Christ who walks with us on paths of life.

Yours in Christ,

- ✠ Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland and NZCBC President**
- ✠ Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Hamilton and NZCBC Secretary**
- ✠ John Dew, Cardinal Archbishop of Wellington, NZCBC Vice President**
- ✠ Paul Martin SM, Bishop of Christchurch**
- ✠ Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin**
- ✠ Michael Gielen, Auxiliary Bishop of Auckland**