

The Right Reverend Kevin Robertson
Area Bishop of York-Scarborough
Bishop Suffragan of Toronto



The Incorporated Synod
of the Diocese of Toronto

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Maundy Thursday 2020

To the Clergy and People of York-Scarborough (*Please share widely*)

Dear friends,

As we journey through Holy Week this year, we do so in unfamiliar ways. We celebrated Palm Sunday without the usual palm processions. There will be no washing of feet or gathering around the table tonight to recall the Last Supper. We won't be huddling outside in the darkness around a new fire on Holy Saturday, or enjoying the fragrance of a church full of flowers on Easter morning. This Holy Week has meant entering into the Paschal mystery from a distance, separated from those in our church families. Most of us are not accustomed to such isolation, and I know this has been really hard over the past four weeks.

While we continue our virtual experience of Holy Week this year, please remember that you are not alone. Though we are separated physically, we join with Christians near and far; past, present and future; in this realm and in the heavenly realm; as we sing our joyful praises to our risen Saviour this Easter. St. Paul reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:31-39), including the physical distance that we are now forced to endure. Let us remember our oneness in Christ this Easter, and our faith in the One who is making all things new.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your faithfulness during this pandemic. Across the 58 parishes of York-Scarborough, I hear stories of God's people continuing to carry out mission and ministry in the name of Christ. Our network of outreach ministries is going strong, though many churches have had to shift the ways they care for the most vulnerable. I also hear stories of Bible studies that are taking place by Zoom, prayer groups that meet by phone, and parish groups that have turned their focus to sewing masks and other kinds of personal protective equipment for hospitals and shelters. As someone has said, our church buildings may be closed, but the Church is certainly not!

In particular, I want to thank the clergy of our Area. They have consistently and creatively found ways of leading worship and offering pastoral care in the midst of difficult and rapidly changing circumstances. I am so proud of the leadership they are giving, even at considerable cost to themselves and their families. Please continue to pray for them, and for each other, and all who are suffering in any way from the effects of the COVID-19 virus.

Even in these difficult days, I invite you to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ with exuberant joy and gladness, wherever you may be this Easter. Church bells will be rung across our Diocese at 9:00 am on Sunday, but in your own homes or apartments you may wish to step outside and do the same. If your own parish is offering a live stream or a pre-recorded Easter service, please join in.

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You can also tune into the Cathedral at 11:00 am. Wherever you are, proclaim our Easter joy, that Christ is risen from the dead and has conquered death forever. Alleluia!

May the God of resurrection bring new life and hope to us and to our world. Happy Easter!

Yours faithfully,

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