



AN EASTER MESSAGE

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

There are times where the beautiful story of Easter becomes so habitual in faith and practice that we become immune to its reality in our daily lives. Although this year, I believe we have hit a point of the true reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in our world. Last year at the beginning of Lent, many of us sat and watched hourly press conferences on our televisions to hear updates of what was about to happen with a mystery virus that was sweeping across the globe. Then reality sunk in, we moved from the freedoms of everyday living into a lockdown period that felt endless. Then Easter came along and we celebrated the greatest week of the Church's liturgical year locked down away from our loved ones and with our eyes glued to a television or computer screen trying to join in the various Holy Week Ceremonies. For me as Bishop, celebrating the holiest week of the year in front of a camera was an experience I hope and pray never to do again.

The Covid experience truly was a period of darkness that made us all vulnerable to despair and loneliness. This same vulnerability that we experienced unites us with the reality of Calvary. It paints an image of darkness that was also experienced by Jesus in his Passion and Death. This year we have entered a new stage, as restrictions are being lifted and we will happily once again be joined together as a community of faith, celebrating the Resurrection of Christ in public.

This wonderful knowledge that we can do this is more than just a 'feeling' - it is an experience of joy that makes us leap with excitement and happiness. This is the same joy and happiness that the disciples felt on that first Easter Sunday, after that period of darkness and loneliness of Good Friday 2000 years ago. This year our happiness that comes from being reunited with loved ones, going back to Mass and celebrating Easter again is indeed a resurrection experience.

Friends, as we come to celebrate this wonderful day of Christ's resurrection from the tomb, let us not take the event for granted, nor let Easter become habitual. Let us remember that this moment in history changed everything. May the experience of joy that we feel as we see the end of the pandemic be the same experience of joy that we have as we come to celebrate the victory over death in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Blessed and Happy Easter
In the Prayers of Mary, Mother of the Risen one, I leave you all*

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**The Most Reverend Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE DD
Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes**

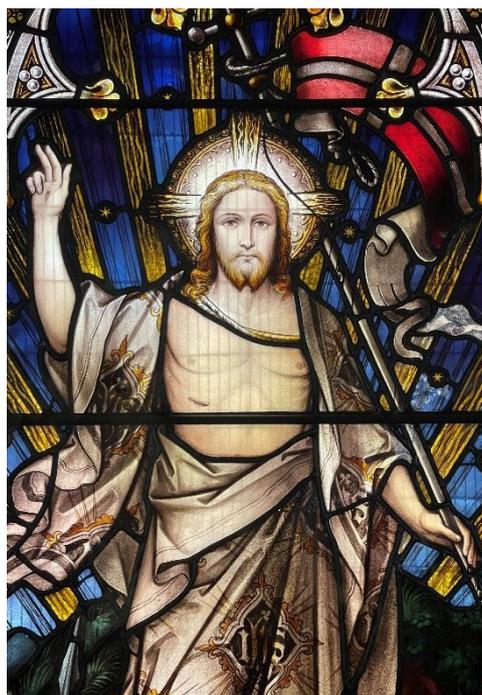


Image: Stain glass window of the Resurrection at St Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church, Forbes NSW