

An Extraordinary Easter 2020

My Dear Friends:

I write this short letter to you on the Feast of Easter, the Resurrection of the Lord, recognizing that this year, we have been unable to gather in our Churches for this most important feast. Due to the Covid-19 virus, we were forced to stay isolated in our homes, and to pray to the Lord as Jesus noted in our Ash Wednesday celebration from the Gospel of Matthew: *“When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret, will reward you.”*

The inability to go to Church to pray has brought much stress to many people, including your priests and your bishop. However, you must be reassured that we are praying for you each day, in our private Masses, and we are longing to have our congregations back in their churches. We must work through this uncertain time together, as a faithful people, aware of the need to safeguard ourselves, our families, and one another until this virus has passed.

In a special pray offered by Pope Francis on Friday, March 27th. of this year, the Holy Father reassured the world of the presence of the Lord in our lives and how our faith strengthens us in times of uncertainty. I would like to quote a part of his prayer based on the Gospel story of the apostles in the boat in a storm.

Pope Francis said: *“The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by His cross, we have been saved. We have a rudder: by His cross, we have been redeemed. We have hope: by His cross, we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from His redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: He is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from His cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame that never falters, and let us allow Hope to be rekindled.”*

May these powerful words of Pope Francis strengthen our Easter Hope and guide us through this uncertain time, in the knowledge that Jesus the Risen One, accompanies us in our journey and is by our side. May the Lord bless you and your families this Easter.

Bishop Fred Colli
Bishop of Thunder Bay