



From +John...

Dear Friends

“Jesus Christ,” said Pascal, *“will be in his death throes till the end of the world.”* As we have drawn closer to Holy Week and therefore Good Friday, I have been thinking about the LAMPEDUSA CROSS which Pope Francis gave to the 19 Anglican and 19 Catholic Bishops last October when we were at the IARCCUM Meeting. I have been wondering how I might be able to use this cross on Good Friday. These crosses have been made from the wreckage of lifeboats washed up on the Island of Lampedusa. It is the place many refugees have tried to reach, often in flimsy and overcrowded boats, many drowning on the way.

The cross is a visible reminder of the terrible suffering of those people, in life and in death. In the thousands of people who have drowned, Jesus Christ has once again been “in his death throes.” Wherever people suffer, are persecuted, treated like slaves, or even ridiculed or made fun of, wherever people are treated without the dignity every human being deserves, Jesus is “in his death throes.”

As we prepare to participate in these Sacred days we are invited to journey with Jesus to Jerusalem, to the room of the Last Supper, to Gethsemane and Calvary. This means that we are invited to pray and reflect, to identify with Jesus in his suffering and agony, AND to be aware of the millions throughout the world who suffer and die. Those millions may not be suffering and dying in dramatic ways; they may be in our streets and even in our homes, desperate people looking to us, begging for a sign of hope and a touch or a look of love and kindness. When human beings suffer in any way at all *“Jesus Christ will be in his death throes till the end of the world.”*

Even the horror of the Lampedusa Cross is not the final word. We don't just go to the Good Friday Passion ceremony, we mourn and wait on Holy Saturday, and then our faith in the Resurrection of Jesus reminds us that there is a future for every human being. God exists; that is the real meaning of Easter. *“Anyone who even begins to grasp what this means also knows what it means to be redeemed.”* (Pope Benedict XVI)

May the days of Holy Week and Easter be days of deep blessings and abundant peace.

+ John

NEWS . . .

- Please remember in prayer **clergy who are not so well** - Michael Sweere, Leone Iosefo, Des Moosman and Maurice Carmody.
- **Fr Eric Urlich** will be celebrating his 90th birthday on 12 April. Eric is now a resident at the rest home in Kaikoura Hospital. We remember him in prayer and wish him well on this 90th birthday.
- As of today only 12 priests have indicated that they will attend the **Day of Prayer** at St Thomas More Church in Wilton on Tuesday 11 April. If you wish to attend and have not yet responded to the invitation please do so immediately. Numbers are needed for catering purposes. Also let my office know if you intend to stay on for a light dinner prior to the Chrism Mass.
t.halliday@wn.catholic.org.nz
- **Good Friday Collection for the Holy Land**
I recently received a letter from Cardinal Sandri, Prefect for the Congregation for Oriental Churches. In his letter he made a plea for generous giving and support for the Good Friday Collection for the Holy Land and reminded us of where the New Zealand contributions go:
Works for the benefit of young people: this finances 390 scholarships for university study for a period of 4 years. 178 of those are for young people in difficulty and some of them are for Bethlehem University, of which Brother Peter Bray (former Director of the Wellington Catholic Education Centre) is the Chancellor.
Cana, the Sanctuary of the first miracle of Jesus: money goes to maintenance of the complex and towards the building of a new school.
- Registration forms for the Clergy Assembly in May have been sent to all clergy of the Archdiocese. Please send your registration form back to my office by 26 April.

“Go, you are sent”