

Easter Message 2021

The card read “*This is the night in which Christ has destroyed death and from the dead He rises victorious! Happy Easter*”. The Easter card tradition is a much quieter one than what we all experience at Christmas. There isn’t as large of a number of cards arriving at Easter and yet when we think about it, the celebration is even more profound than what we celebrate at Christmas.

We have just celebrated the Easter Triduum behind closed doors for the second year in succession. The most sacred season of the year once again without any physical congregation. This is very hard on people of faith. Once again I thank our priests and parish teams for their creativity and ingenuity in making great use of the webcam, FaceBook live, parish radio etc. to livestream ceremonies into the homes of parishioners. By doing so, the kitchen table in your home has become an extension of the altar in your local church. I thank all of you who have been leading prayer in your homes this past while. The domestic Church has come into its own during this pandemic. While the virtual will remain with us whenever this pandemic passes, we all long for the gathering, we all wish to be back with one another. We can really understand and empathise with the need the disciples had for gathering two thousand years ago.

It’s interesting in the gospel, resurrection encounters take place not only behind closed doors, but in spite of them “*in the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were*” (Jn.20:19), and despite the closed doors Jesus walks among them. His message then and His message to us this Easter is no different “*Peace be with you*” (Jn.20:19). A tiny, invisible virus, thousands of times smaller than the head of a pin has tested our resilience, has torn apart our economies and has very much tweaked our priorities. Yet in all of this the Risen One walks among us, carrying us, comforting us, consoling us.

Just over a year ago Pope Francis spoke in a deserted St. Peter’s Square and reflected on the text from St. Mark about the storm at sea and how Jesus was asleep at the stern. His message in that rain swept square was and remains that Jesus is very much with us. The Risen One walks by our side. As we celebrate Easter once more in the midst of the suffering the world is enduring because of this pandemic may you experience the new life of resurrection, and from another Easter card I read:

*May the Lord bless you this Easter time;
Bless you with faith, guard you in doubt;
Bless you with hope, uplift you in despair;
Bless you with love, keep you from fear;
Bless you with peace, calm you in trouble;
Bless you with mercy, help you to forgive;
Bless you with joy, comfort you in sorrow;
So your heart may rejoice in Him who is Risen.
Amen.*

**Bishop Denis Nulty
Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin**