

Dear members of the Columban Family, Parishioners of St Pius X Parish, Raiwaqa, Holy Family Parish, Labasa, Christ the King Parish, Ba and friends, greetings this Easter Season.

At the beginning of last week, we worried and fretted about Covid 19. Then in the middle of the week Tropical Cyclone Harold swept through the Fiji Group – bringing more anxiety, suffering, pain and loss of property to many families especially in Kadavu and Lau Group.

Yes, as it has been voiced so many times in recent weeks by leaders of state and churches that “we are going through difficult, hard, fearful and anxious times – economic hardships, unemployment and great uncertainty about the future”. People rightly wonder will they ever get back to ‘normal.’ Will they ever get through these difficult times?

Many people think because of the imposed restrictions Holy Week and the celebration of Easter has been ruined this year. While we can appreciate those sentiments, in reality the present crisis, with sickness, fear, isolation, quarantine, lockdowns, curfews (and death in other countries) actually heightens the significance of the Easter Message this year. The Good News of the Resurrection of Christ, and his victory over suffering and death must give us confidence and hope in the midst of our present day anxieties and worries.

Even with Masses and Easter Ceremonies cancelled due to the Coronavirus, we Catholics and Christians can still find meaning in our homes and families as we reflect on the Easter Message. Our sacrifices and our co-operation with the Government, Church leaders and with God’s help - we will like Jesus emerge victorious and find consolation in this present times of struggle. The Jewish experience of ‘Passover’ from the slavery of Egypt to the Promised Land and Christ experience of ‘Passover’ from this world back to the Father were not easy. To get to the other side — both for the people of Israel and for Jesus - required anguish, setback, adversity, danger and risk, but they came through. With God’s help so will we.

On the 27th March, Pope Francis spoke of this pandemic experience as a call ‘to reassess our way of life and rediscover what really matters in life’. Yes, indeed it would be a pity if when these restrictions are lifted and we can leave our homes again, and think that it will all be a return to the ‘normal’ before Covid 19 paralyzed the world. No it can’t be!! Hopefully, it will be an occasion to begin anew with changed attitudes, perspectives and priorities in the way we live and treat others. The risen Jesus is calling us again to be authentic believers in his Resurrection and his victory over sin, suffering and death. Let us ask Him for the strength to realise that we are all brothers and sisters on this planet and all members of the family of God.

Peace, Joy and Easter Blessings to you all. {John McEvoy (Nasese) 11/04/2020}.