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Pastoral Letter #4

9 April

Dear Parishioners

Special Blessings to each of you in these days commemorating the Passion, Death and Resurrection. As we come to celebrate the Resurrection we don't forget the reality of Jesus's and our own suffering.

This will likely be a unique Easter of our lives. Most of us will hopefully avoid sickness but we all feel the effects in varying ways of social isolation. This isolation is the direct opposite of what we take for granted to be Church, a community that gathers together to celebrate our communion with Christ and one another. While we cannot gather together physically we can connect in other ways.

The other day I went for a walk along the Hatea River towards Mair Park. I "ran into" (I walk not run) a young couple from the parish. Keeping a safe distance I spoke to them. When I have an encounter like that, it seems to me it is a **providence** not just a coincidence.

There are, I believe some providences in the times we are in. Lots of people are reaching out in support of those around. Thank you to those in the parish who are contacting parishioners on our behalf. I worry if we are meeting your needs. Yet most of the few phone calls we receive are from parishioners concerned as how we are doing..

There is a proverb "*Every Cloud has a silver lining*".

We can apply that to the journey through the darkness of death to the Resurrection but also to a new outlook we hopefully get through these experiences.

We live in hope that one day in the not too distant future we will gather again. I hope too that we will meet each other in a new way.

I can remember saying when we shifted out of the old church in Bank Street that "when we get to the new church we will be changed people". Just like the the people of Isreal were transformed between the Exodus and when they arrived in the promised land. At the end of this Lent we are hopefully a little different by our experiences from when we began.

Remember the first words of Jesus after the Resurrection "**Peace be with you**".

All blessings and prayers for you all.

Fr Chris Martin s.m.

Parish Priest.