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A SURE HOPE IN A TIME OF ADVERSITY

(Bishop's Easter Greeting, 12 April 2020)

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." (Rom 15:13, ESV)

Our Dear People in all Parishes,

I greet you, my dear brothers and sisters, with the traditional Easter greeting:

***"The Lord is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"***

COVID-19 has thrust the whole world into a period of great uncertainty, fear and deep struggle. We desperately need God's help and God's intervention for us to come through this severe time of anxiety, social dislocation and danger to human life.

Let us be assured that the Lord is present with us in our troubles and sorrows. He is God with us! He is the God who protects and delivers (Ps 91). He is also the God of resurrection! Today, we are celebrating the *bodily* resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our God has wonderfully overturned all the effects of human sin. Even death has been conquered by the Lord Jesus!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ on that first Easter morning proves that, even in the darkest of times, everything that happens is under the will of God and will finally lead to the blazing light of God's victory. This is because God is good and He is great, and His steadfast love endures forever.

And so, beloved of God, let us go through this time of adversity with *assurance* in the Holy Spirit that we will come through the present crisis and see the victory of God. Blessed be the Shepherd of His people and the Ruler of the nations!

I exhort you, as God's people, to glorify the Lord Jesus by adhering strictly to all the 'stay safe' measures in your country; by staying in touch with and encouraging one another in the community of faith; and by looking out for and extending practical care to people in your society who are specially in need, including the lonely. May I also exhort you to give yourself to 'beseeching prayer' until the light of God's deliverance dawns (Ps 130:5-6).

In the grace of God, all who trust in the Lord Jesus belong to an unshakable kingdom (Heb 12:28-29). May we be God's instruments of love, hope and peace in this time of shaking. Let EASTER joy bring us all fresh hope for the future and the strength to serve others in these testing times. May the Lord accomplish His saving purposes and be glorified!

I keep you close in my thoughts and prayers. The grace and power of the risen Lord be upon us all.

With much love in Christ,
Bishop Rennis