

We are into the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic and just as we thought we are getting out of this long drawn challenge of pestilence with the proposed ease of restrictions, we now see a spike in cases and increase in deaths globally. Meanwhile, we are extremely saddened and shocked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While we may be shocked and upset over the recent atrocities committed, we should not be surprised that all these are taking place. Scripture is very clear, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains" (ESV, Matt. 24:6-8).

As we live in this end-time before the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are instructed to be on our guard (Mark. 13: 9a). We need to stand firm or to remain faithful in Christ in the midst of all that we are going through and experiencing. Humanly, we will not be able to deal with all these challenges with our human strength—we need the Lord, and we need to step-up our prayers. On our knees we will seek the Lord and find

## THE VICAR WRITES

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the strength to overcome the season. "The one who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 24:13).

As we enter into the season of Lent, let's be reminded the call of our Lord to RETURN TO OUR FIRST LOVE, and we also want to heed the recent exhortation of Bishop Titus Chung to live Lent wisely. To help us to live Lent wisely, the church has prepared the Lent meditation for this year with the focus on the 'FATHER HEART OF GOD'. The series of meditations and prayers that follow is inspired by the book 'RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON—a Story of Homecoming' by Henri J.M. Nouwen. Please pick up a copy from the church after service, or alternatively you can download a copy from our Cathedral website at <https://cathedral.org.sg/lent>. May we be spiritually enriched as we spend time to fast and step-up personal and corporate prayers over this season of Lent.

The word "PRAY" is written in large, bold, white capital letters, centered on the page. The background is a dark, reddish-brown color with silhouettes of people in various prayerful poses, some with arms raised, creating a sense of collective worship.