



## EASTER MESSAGE 2021

### Christ Is Risen!

Recently one of our beloved priests died. I was blessed to pray with him and his closest friends on that day. It was a sad, but beautiful occasion. As we sat around his bed, his friends shared their stories of how he had touched their lives; It was clear they loved him dearly and were grateful that he had been part of their family for so many years. It was clear to me he had loved them too and their presence brought him enormous reassurance.

As we talked, I could not help but think of the reality of the Paschal Mystery – dying and rising.

I reflected on this priest's life and wondered at all the Holy Thursdays, Good Fridays and Easter days he had celebrated. Just as I was about to leave he awoke unexpectedly! He gave me a huge smile and gave me his blessing – it was if heaven and earth met for those few minutes. He was ready and peaceful. He awaited that final breath when he would see God face-to-face.

It is no mistake that we see the reality of the paschal mystery all around us! The pattern of dying and rising. We see this across our beautiful diocese marked in the beauty of autumn and as we fast approach the cold winter – we do so in the knowledge of Spring days and Summer harvest. We experience this too in our lives – dying and rising – loving and letting go – remembering and living.

We are mindful of the suffering of those who have lived through the torrential rains and flooding waters and losses they face. Once again we see the goodness of so many who quickly come to the aide of friend and stranger with such compassion.

Our news reminds of us the deep yearning for peace in Myanmar and other countries where people live in turmoil. There are tragic stories of individuals whose lives are beset by the violence and whose vulnerability is exploited by others.

St Paul uses a beautiful ancient hymn in his Letter to the Philippians:

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,  
Did not count his equality with God something to be grasped.  
Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,  
Coming in human likeness.  
And being found in human form he humbled himself  
And became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.  
*(St Paul to the Philippians 2:6-8)*

**MOST REVEREND GREGORY BENNET BISHOP OF SALE**

PO Box 1410, Warragul, Vic 3820, Australia P +612 5622 6690 E [bishop@sale.catholic.org.au](mailto:bishop@sale.catholic.org.au)

[www.cdsale.org.au](http://www.cdsale.org.au)

We will soon commence our spiritual journey through these three holy days of 2021, remembering that God came among us in his most perfect self-expression in his son, Jesus. A God who assumed our human condition in all things, but sin. A God whose face has been revealed in Jesus. A God who enters our human story and our suffering bringing healing, compassion, mercy and draws us into the communion of love. We enter these Holy Days of the Triduum not only to remember, but to live the reality of the love of Jesus who emptied himself in order that we would be filled with his love, forgiveness and salvation. He has died that we might rise.

Our spiritual journey commences as we enter:

**Holy Thursday** recalling the Last Supper and the call to service in the washing of the feet.

**Good Friday** we will remember the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. We will witness one another place our sufferings and prayer at the foot of the cross.

**Easter Night** we will gather around the fire recalling that the Risen Christ has conquered the darkness of sin and death.

Each year we celebrate this great Feast, we know the story, yet we hear it differently through the lens of our experience.

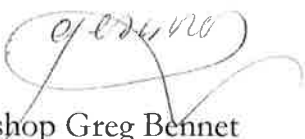
We remember our personal call to service as followers of Jesus and his enduring presence to us as we gather for Eucharist;

We remember our sorrows and painful losses;

We remember that our dying leads to life.

**May the joy of Easter shine forth in us – may it illumine the darkness – may comfort in our sorrow – may it be our gift in our dying.**

**Christ is Risen, alleluia!**

+   
Bishop Greg Bennet  
Bishop of Sale