

EASTER MESSAGE 2017

I don't want these few words to be about me, but as I reflect on Christ crucified and risen, I can't help but powerfully relate to this truth without allowing myself to die and rise as well. Jesus, of course, has shown us the way and we follow faithfully.

Easter has come at exactly the right time. It always does.

It is no secret that I have been doing a little dying myself over the past few months. My increasingly frail parents have preoccupied my thoughts; my finishing up as Parish Priest of Surfers Paradise has caused me some emotional letting go; and my call to become the Bishop of Townsville on top of this has been the trifecta I could not have envisaged.

I have felt somewhat overwhelmed as a result. Part of me has died even though I live my life as a person of the resurrection. These days have proved to be the most profound in my spiritual journey of life.

That is my lot in life. Others will have their story to tell and they too will connect it to Christ's Story, which is our story too. As I write this reflection, I am very conscious of the devastation caused by Cyclone Debbie in parts of North Queensland. Some of these communities have had livelihoods and properties ruined by the forces of nature. Their "little deaths" are real but the Easter message is not lost on them. Through the emergency agencies and the practical help of others, the human face of Christ will be seen as will the truth of the resurrection.

We walk by faith, not by sight, and life is a mystery to be lived, for to live is to die and to die is to live. I love life because I know that Christ takes our hand and says "follow me".

We can choose freely to walk with Christ and all that entails, or we can choose death by our own making. That is a sin.

For me, I do not fully understand this mystery but I know that we do not die in vain whatever our circumstances or story. Thank God for Easter. Thank God for faith. It is in these times of uncertainty and even doubt that Jesus Christ shows us his beautiful face to which we proclaim Alleluia Alleluia.

May the joy of Easter settle our fears and cause us to spread the good news with all the world. This is our responsibility this Easter and every Easter. Death has been defeated. Let our little deaths produce abundant life, life eternal.

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