

**It's worth living for**  
**Bishop Christopher Saunders – 2017 Easter Message**  
**Diocese of Broome**

I would like to wish you, your family and community a very joyful Easter celebration. It is my prayer that the wonder of the risen Lord which we celebrate in our religious festivities may flow into your lives bringing a feeling of great hope and peace.

As we contemplate the meaning of Easter, it is worth reflecting on the fact that Jesus did not wish to die. He enjoyed life. His living was marked with the visible happiness of a family to support him.

He sought the company of friends often sharing meals and wine at table while sometimes attending parties such as at the wedding feast of Cana. He travelled extensively throughout the Holy Land; he engaged in meaningful discussions with learned peoples, he debated important matters of the day, befriended the poor and the marginalised and lived among simple folk such as the fishermen he chose as his disciples.

He taught, led, worshipped, healed, prayed, advised, corrected, and inspired a host of people who welcomed him as a hero and a prophet. No, he didn't wish to die. And he said just that in the garden of Gethsemane before his arrest when he prayed to the Father that the cup might pass him by.

Yet, for all this, Jesus nonetheless prepared for his death in Jerusalem conscious as he was that the established authorities plotted against him. They saw in him a serious threat to their power and privilege.

But no matter the terror of the Cross he refused to resile from the truth that he preached. He would not bow down to the corruption and injustices of his day. His mission from the Father was to establish the kingdom of heaven and bring the Good News to humanity that God's love is merciful, forgiving and all embracing.

He brought blessings to those who would listen: 'Blessed are the merciful, the poor, the gentle, the peaceful, the pure, the persecuted, and those who mourn'. Life is worth living, he believed, but also some things are worth dying for. Truth is one of them. So too, we were worth dying for. "Our Father... Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven", he had once prayed. And he lived out that belief until his death.

When Christ rose from the dead he became to our world a living testimony of God's boundless love for us all. This act of redemption has saved us from ourselves and from the despair of our human condition. There is for us after death now real life, and life to the full, eternal life. That is in itself simply an abundance of Good News that fills us with hope and peace. Happy Easter!