

God is present in our solidarity and solitude

This is a time of great transition and disruption. Our lives have rapidly been emptied of their normal routines and activities, spending much more time at home, with less and less of the connections and contacts that we take for granted. More and more shops and businesses have closed, and even our churches, playgrounds and cafes stand silent and empty. As we worry about how the pandemic might progress, we are feeling vulnerable and anxious, uncertain about what the coming months will hold for us.

Yet this is also a time of hope. I have been heartened and encouraged by the creative and generous ways that people are finding to maintain social connection even if we are physically distant. We are more aware of our solidarity with one another and the importance of our community structures.

The period of Lent, preparing for Easter, is a time when we let go of some of the extra things in our lives, focusing on what is essential and strengthening our trust in the faithfulness of God's care for us. We might think of these months as an extended and dramatic period of Lent or retreat.

Our Easter celebrations this year will be muted. Nonetheless, they are an anticipation of the hope we proclaim each Easter, of the God who knows the desolation, darkness and emptiness of Jesus' death on the cross, and who brings the new life of the Resurrection.

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