



Catholic Diocese of Geraldton

Bishop of Geraldton W.A.

Bishop Michael Morrissey 2023 Easter Message

“Filled with awe and great joy, the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples”. Mt 28:8

“He has risen from the dead and now is going before you to Galilee, it is there you will see him”. These words spoken by the angel of the Lord in Matthew’s Gospel for the Easter Vigil Mass, immediately scattered the darkness of despair for the women coming to visit the Jesus’ tomb. They were filled with awe and great joy, and ran to their friends, the disciples. On their way, Jesus appeared to them and gave them instructions to give to the disciples. They all had seen him die on the cross in the dark events of Good Friday, but now they were joyful messengers of a new reality. *‘O truly blessed night, when things of heaven are wed to those of earth, and divine to the human’*. (Exsultet)

From total despair to overwhelming joy, the women became the first missionary disciples!

In reflecting on this, I thought of all I have seen and witnessed over the past year in the small and varied communities of faith, in both the Dioceses of Geraldton and Broome, scattered throughout this vast part of Western Australia.

I have seen people’s faith, joy, hope and deep connection with their risen Lord, despite circumstances and situations often challenging, with no easy answers. I have seen many making decisions and choices based on their deep relationship with Jesus. I have witnessed also living saints in these communities, supporting one another to remain people of hope and joy. These are indeed missionary disciples, *“...available to answer His call and to live united to the Lord in the most common daily things - work, meeting other people, our daily duties, the chance events of each day - allowing ourselves to be guided always by the Holy Spirit.”* Pope Francis.

January was a terrible time for many people in the Fitzroy Valley, where homes, businesses, local communities, and pastoral properties suffered so much from record floods. We all saw devastating images and all realised the magnitude of the situation and how difficult life had become for so many people within our own country. (We all saw too, people walking through flood waters carrying the precious Nurrara Canvas at Fitzroy Crossing, which was a symbol of hope for the community.) People of all walks of life reached out to one another, helping with boats and other forms of assistance to those in their hour of need. This kindness and compassion is often something always there, but it’s times like these where it becomes truly evident. In actions of kindness and compassion we see and show the face of Jesus, the risen Lord, revealing to us the eternal love and kindness of God the Father. This is what people of Faith do as missionary disciples, revealing the risen Lord, *“...alive for God in Christ Jesus.”* Rm 6:11B

Let us not hide this good news, but be filled with awe and great joy, like the women who visited the sepulchre on the first Easter morning and let us be eager to share this good news.

Let us bless one another this Easter with our kindness and compassion and I pray that the blessings of Jesus, the Risen Lord, will be with you through all the seasons of your life.

The Most Rev. Michael H. Morrissey
Bishop of Geraldton