



CATHOLIC
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OF SYDNEY



MEDIA STATEMENT

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EASTER CALLS US TO END OUR FACTIONS AND HOSTILITIES

A Statement from the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP

In many ways contemporary societies are deeply divided. Our politics are often polarised and social media vicious, the language is extreme, and it's all or nothing.

We can feel that not much has changed since that first Good Friday.

Angry mobs still demand crucifixion, or cancellation. There seems to be no room for debate, for listening, persuading, and being persuaded, for the good kind of compromise.

The language of tolerance and live-and-let-live has been replaced by totalising ideologies and loyalty groups. It is into these deep divisions that the Easter message must be spoken anew.

Easter is a season of contradictions:

Violence and peace, heartache, and joy, light and darkness, death and resurrection.

As he was dying on the cross, Jesus famously appealed on behalf of his persecutors: "Forgive them Father--they know not what they do."

Jesus had already commanded his disciples to love their enemies, forgive endlessly, turn the other cheek. He wanted them to be known for their love of all, especially the weak and unloved.

He counselled them against storing grievances and counting up what they were owed. If they wanted to be children of the God who makes the rain fall on the good and bad alike, they had to stop dividing humanity into allies and foes.

Everyone is either our friend already or a potential friend. And we want peace with them all. Such Easter talk is as counter cultural as ever.

Easter calls us to *end* our factions and hostilities. "Enough now. Put away the sword. Peace be with you. My own peace I bequeath to you."

This does not mean we should cease our pursuit of truth. But our endeavours should always reflect a respect for the other person and good will towards them.

The empty tomb of Jesus was a sign of God's victory over hatred, violence, death, over everything that diminishes the human person and community.

Amor vincit omnia: love overcomes everything. That is an authentic love overcomes, a self-sacrificing love, not a self-indulgent love.

As Jesus rose glorious but still with the wounds of human cruelty, his followers are called to bring Easter redemption to every site of conflict and hurt. We join Jesus on the cross, in the tomb, and in glory saying "Forgive them Father."

For a digital copy of the 2023 Easter message [click here](#)

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