



**Archbishop's Message**  
Archbishop Christopher Prowse

## “When Evening Had Come” (Mark: 4/35)

Pope Francis has been reaching out to the world with great Spiritual Wisdom.

On March 27 his Holiness delivered a marvellous meditation based on Mark 4:35/41. The disciples are in the boat during the storm and Jesus is “asleep on a cushion” (v. 38). He links the Gospel to our Covid-19 crisis beautifully.

Here are some direct quotes. First, our present situation. “When evening had come” (v. 35). “For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void ... we feel it in the air, we notice it in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost.”

Secondly, Jesus' response to the disciples in the boat.

“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” (v. 38) ‘Do you not care’: they think Jesus is not interested in them. But he, more than anyone, cares about us.

Indeed, once they called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.”

Thirdly, what is our faith response in the present crisis?

“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” (v. 40) “Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: ‘Be converted!’ “Return to me with all your hearts” (Joel 2:12).

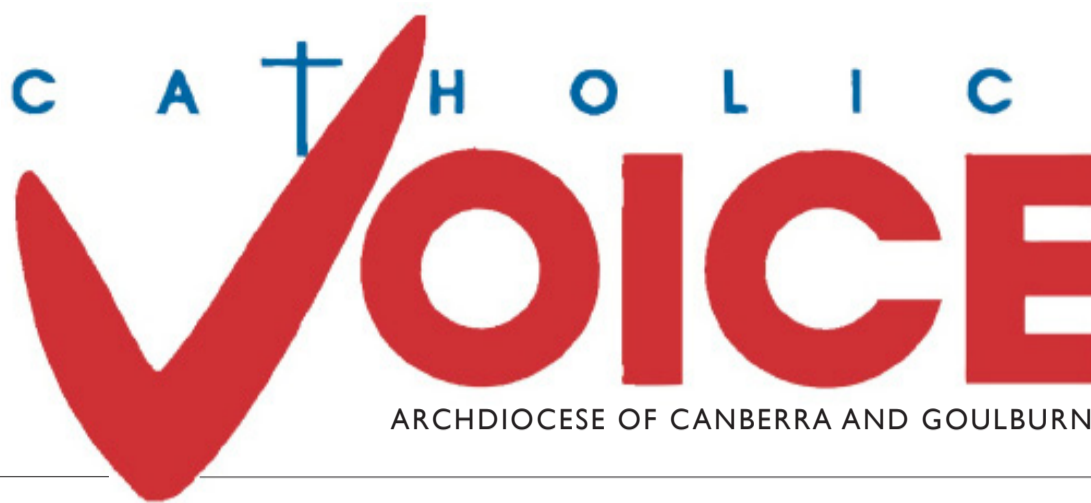
Fourthly, the challenge to our faith is clear.

“You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not a time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others.”

Take the time to reflect on these words of Pope Francis.

**You will find the full text at:** [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco\\_20200327\\_omelia-epidemia.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_omelia-epidemia.html)

My daily prayers and blessings are directed to you, my dear people.



“Our lives are upended so we need each other and God more than ever. Do use the Catholic Voice website to stay connected and keep informed.”

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# The time to plant daffodils

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

“PARK and pray”, drive-through reconciliation and a new YouTube channel – our priests are rising to the challenge of connecting with their communities cut off by COVID-19.

As clergy carve out new routines with services no longer filling their diaries, they are heeding Archbishop Christopher's call to devise ways for parishioners to feel “the closeness and caress of God”.

Some of the new measures include:

- A YouTube channel set up by Fr Peter Day to post homilies and short messages,
- Drive-through reconciliation at St Bernard's in Batemans Bay where parishioners speak to Fr Martins from their car,
- ‘Park and pray’ at St Peter Chanel's in Yarralumla with exposition for parishioners in their cars outside the church, and
- Home prayer kits with small jars of holy water, blessed candles and holy cards.

Archbishop Christopher used an online meeting with his 41 priests on Tuesday to thank and encourage

**“Now is the time to plant daffodils. They will be a great sign of hope.”**

• **Fr Richard Thompson**

them for their pastoral work.

A proud Fr Peter Day from Queanbeyan revealed he had set up his own YouTube channel and urged priests to follow his lead.

“If I can manage the technology then you can too,” Fr Peter said.

Reconciliation is continuing at Batemans Bay every Saturday at 5pm but parishioners now stay in their cars and Fr Martins keeps the right distance.

“It has been rewarding,” Fr Martins said. “The parishioners can talk and get things off their chest and I can offer words of comfort and encourage them.

“The parishioners are my family. I am the father in the family but one day I wake up and the family has gone.”

Fr Martins' message is to stay focused on the present and God.

“The normal routine of life has gone but there is still magic in the



moment,” he said.

On Sunday morning, parishioners at St Peter Chanel's in Yarralumla stayed in their cars for Exposition and Benediction on the back veranda.

“It was an opportunity for spiritual communion and adoration and the parishioners' gratitude was overwhelming,” Fr Trenton van Reesch said.

Fr Richard Thompson from South Woden reminded priests to look out for one another and applauded the Archdiocese's daily online Mass.

“Not having a routine is unhealthy when we have had one all of our adult lives,” Fr Richard said.

Fr Mick MacAndrew from Cooma said he too was struggling adjusting to a different routine.

## The pain of being separated from Mum

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

A window and COVID-19 separates Liz Bulley and her family from their dear Mum Colleen.

The mother-of-six went into residential aged care in January and the home went into lockdown on March 24.

At the time her Mum needs her most, a distraught Liz cannot be there.

“I think about all the things she has done for us” Liz said.

“When we have had our difficulties Mum was always the first one there.

“This is the most difficult time of her life. Mum is at her most vulnerable and we cannot be there.

“I feel I've really let her down.”

It is particularly tough for the family because their Mum cannot phone them without assistance.

Colleen recently got a hearing aid so she has to rely on staff to manage the device and connect it to her mobile phone so the family can call her.

Not being able to visit or talk to Mum is distressing for Liz, a mother-of-two who works at the Holy Trinity Early Learning Centre



Liz (left) and sister Cathy visit Mum Colleen (in pink, behind the window)

in Curtin.

Colleen, whose husband died of a heart attack in 1991, had been living independently in Woden since 2016.

But she has Parkinson's disease and following a hospital admission last August the Parkinson's rapidly progressed.

Since Colleen entered the aged care home, not a day has passed without one of her children visiting her. Then visits were restricted and finally the home went into lockdown.

“Dementia has progressed and Mum gets confused but we have

been a constant for her,” Liz explained. “Suddenly we are not there anymore.

“We have done everything we can and Mum is where she needs to be.

“I understand the focus on preventing coronavirus but I am more concerned about Mum's well-being.

“Family is everything and it's all Mum has got. If she was comfortable and surrounded by her family everything would be okay.

“But she is solitary and communicating with her is not easy - it's challenging but we'll find a way.”



## Holy Week Masses live streamed

ALL Holy Week Masses will be live streamed from the crypt at St Christopher's Cathedral.

**The program is:**

Sunday April 5 at 11am - Passion (Palm) Sunday

Tuesday April 7 at 11am - Chrism Mass

**Easter Triduum**

Holy Thursday April 9 at 7pm – Evening Mass

Good Friday April 10: 10am – Way of the Cross

3pm – Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday April 11 at 7pm – Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday April 12 at 11am – Easter Mass

[www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online](http://www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online)

# In times of trouble

BY SHEILA ARMSTEAD

As a widow in London after World War One my grandmother raised her five children alone.

There were no social services. My mother, the eldest, was nine when war began and 13 when it ended.

When World War Two began in 1939, my mother had five children herself. I was the eldest and on September 3, as a seven year old girl, I was evacuated with my sister and brother to the countryside under a government scheme dubbed 'Operation Pied Piper'.

Like thousands of other children, I was sent to live with strangers.

Now, 88 years old and living with my husband Walter in Yass, and with the present crisis occupying my thoughts, I have had cause to ponder those times.

How do we adjust when life as we know it has changed forever?

People in earlier times were no different to us, they just got on and did what they had to do. What choice did they have? They were stoic. They prayed. They adapted.

They weren't confined to the house as we are now; they were on their own in the house. Husband and fathers compulsorily called up to fight an enemy overseas, younger children evacuated and older sons and daughters over 18 called up for active service too.

People learned to cope and did so for six long years. They worried daily whether the telegraph boy would cycle up to their door with a yellow envelope containing bad news while the enemy dropped bombs from the skies.

The unlucky ones lost their homes if not their lives.

Having never worked outside the home, women took on jobs the men vacated, working in factories making munitions and in other essential services.

Women had no experience and there was no technology to help them. But there was no one else to do it.

No social media to amuse or distract them.

Very few people, if any, had a telephone. Letters were the only means of communication, telegrams reserved for bad news.

Postmen, mostly elderly men, were an essential service. Teachers too; elderly people filling the gap in a system that 'ticked over' but was not necessarily the best option for a vibrant education.

Petrol was rationed and reserved for certain groups. If you had a car it had to be mothballed. 'Utility furniture' was the only kind allowed to be manufactured.

Clothing was purchased with coupons and tightly controlled.



**'People in earlier times were no different to us; they just got on and did what they had to do'.**

'Make do and mend' was the mantra.

Food was rationed and fruit unobtainable, unless grown in the UK. Citrus was rarely seen. If a ship got through with oranges from Australia it was like Christmas.

Drummed into everyone was 'Do not help the enemy' and 'Careless talk costs lives'. In other words, be careful what you say. Be wary of strangers or of anyone or anything suspicious. Be on guard. Discipline was paramount and for the most part observed.

The test now will be whether a younger generation, having never known troubled times in a global sense, is able to adapt to limitations by a government in peacetime.

Governments worldwide are trying to control a situation that is out of control with no known antidote. People will die. Government must tread a fine line, maintain a balancing act to keep people alive and country solvent.

It is a sobering thought that the debt Britain accrued fighting World War Two took 50 years to repay.

What will be the debt we leave future generations if our economy collapses?

We need to think beyond immediate inconvenience and short term hardship.

Help people who have lost their jobs, yes, and do whatever else we have to do, while considering the common good and future of our country.

We need to trust that people burdened with leadership in troubled times are doing their best on the best advice.

Mistakes will be made, but who would choose to walk in their shoes? We can be disciplined, we can accept, we can adapt.

And we can do what we have to do and what we are asked to do. It isn't too much to ask, it isn't too difficult, is it?

**• Sheila and husband Walter live in Murrumbateman and are parishioners at St Augustine's in Yass. They celebrated their 65th**

## CLERGY NEWS

# The joy of being an Uncle again

ONE of our youngest priests Fr Trenton van Reesch has become an Uncle again with his older sister Brigitta having her third child last month.

Brigitta and husband Jason welcomed their second son Elias on March 9. Their daughter Dempsey is two and a half and they have a son named Neik who is one and a half.

Fr Trenton, 31, is close to his sister and very close to her children.

"I love the way they leap into



(Left) Fr Trenton with new nephew Elias, (Right) nephew Neik and niece Dempsey



your arms after Mass, talk to you on the phone and the way they cry out 'Tentan' when they see my car,"

Fr Trenton said.

"I also love how they laugh uncontrollably when I am trying to change them. But the greatest joy of being an Uncle is teaching them that there is actually One who loves them even more than me!"

A former Marist student, Fr Trenton was ordained at St

Christopher's Cathedral

on August 28, 2015, and is now the Administrator of the Cathedral.

## PARISH NEWS

# Home prayer kits at the coast

HOME prayer kits which include a small jar of holy water and blessed candle have proved a hit at St Bernard's parish in Batemans Bay.

They have been so popular the parish liturgy team has had to make more.

"Each kit contains a small jar of holy water, a blessed candle, two holy cards, some suggested prayers and articles for spiritual reflection," parishioner Joe Quigley said.

Under the leadership of Phil Billington and Cecilia Jackson, the prayer kits were initially prepared for elderly people. But when public Masses stopped and the churches were shut extra kits were produced.

"Fr Martins has great faith in the priesthood of the laity through baptism and is always looking to get parishioners to spread the good news," Joe said.

"A few weeks ago we had Mass and thought the restrictions were bad enough. Then we had physical



distancing which we enforced by placing ribbons on alternate pews and strategically placing prayer cards to mark the two-arms gap between worshippers.

"Then we learned there would be no public Mass and the church would be shut. But people have shown amazing resilience."

# Saving Joy

BY TERRY FEWTRELL

THE message came on March 21 – my sister Joy O'Neill was at serious risk on the other side of the world, caught up in the coronavirus crisis.

After a truncated Antarctic cruise, the expedition ship that Joy, husband Tom and 150 passengers were on was refused entry to several ports and all were waiting helplessly off Montevideo in Uruguay.

There was alarm and anxiety in the message; a call for help as they lost hope in the local authorities and feared being unable to return to Australia.

My sister is an intrepid traveller, rarely fazed. I could tell this was serious.

The following 10 days were a campaign of raising awareness of the ship's plight and advocating for action to allow them to disembark and fly home.

A media release called for the government to intervene with Uruguayan authorities to get the 150 Australians off the ship and onto a



Terry Fewtrell's sister Joy with husband Tom

charter flight home.

For Joy it was waiting, worrying and wondering what she could do at that end.

At home it was TV and radio interviews and an approach to Foreign Minister Marise Payne. DFAT was working hard to solve the problem.

As time went by my sister's hopes began to slide. A sense of helplessness grew and then a feeling of abandonment. How will it end? Will it end?

The message back was hold tight. Have faith.

All this was taking place on the eve of the first anniversary of our 98-year-old mother's death. Perhaps Joyce can intervene?

**Holy Week Masses live streamed**

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Check the **Catholic Voice** website for dates and times