



FROM THE DESK OF FR SIMON YONG, SJ

PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PARISH

Dear people of God

As I write this, the MCO has been extended. Without the extension, the economic impact is already felt by some people. Now with the prolongation of the mobility restriction, many more people will be affected. According to the Carmelite reformer, St Teresa de Jesus, "Christ has no body, none, but yours". With enforced social distancing, this is the opportune moment where we can become His eyes, ears, hands and feet. It is time that we rally to those who need our assistance. "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me" (Matt 25).

At the Diocesan level, a Crisis Response Team has been assembled. The hotline is Majodi +60 7 283 0166, headed by Mr Albert Tan. It operates from Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm). For the Cathedral, the members of POHD are also at hand to take in calls and requests. For now, you can contact Nancy (011 3166 3008), Bernard (016 738 6202) or Pauline (012 711 7139). We have a food bank but it is depleting. Even with the lockdown, there are some who have continued to send rations for us to distribute. Please do not stop. We are thankful for your help.

I have been celebrating private Masses everyday. And praying that the Lord, who alone can do what we are not able to, will bring an end to this affliction. Some have attributed this as nature's revenge. If nature has God as Creator, then this pestilence must belong to God's permissive will. It therefore begs the question of the reality of our sinfulness for God to allow this affliction to strike us. In the Old Testament, scourges of God invite Israel's repentance. It fits in with the season of Lent. We are invited to make reparation for our sins. It cannot be that Christ came to save a sinless people.

During Holy Week, there will be no public Masses as directed by the Pastoral Letter of the Episcopal Conference of Malaysia. If you were dismayed, know that I feel the anguish too - the excruciating pain of separation for you, my dear people, whom I have come to cherish. In the absence of Mass, what can you do? For those who feel the need to watch the liturgies celebrated, there will be live-streaming of Masses. English liturgy will be celebrated by Bishop Bernard Paul in Majodi. Mandarin liturgy is available from St Theresa's Church, Melaka and presided over by Fr Thomas Chong, SJ. We will provide the links as soon as we can get them.

Other than live-streaming, you can still pray. There are many forms of prayers but the rosary is one which many of you are familiar with. The accusation that it is “repetitive” should not deter you because it is a powerful prayer in times of difficulties. The parish has organised the daily recitation of the rosary from 6am to 8pm ending with praying the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy. Even though you may appear to be praying alone, it is a form of solidarity because the entire parish is engaged in it. Furthermore, our good Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary are praying before the True Presence of Jesus, every day from 6 am to 6 pm. They are praying with us.

Finally, the parish depends and acknowledges your kind donations for her functioning. For the 5 Sundays without public Masses, the shortfall is approximately RM100K in contributions because Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday are both days with exceptional collections. Even so, the parish will continue to pay her staff their monthly salaries as she should. I understand for some people, finances will be tight. But, this is also a time of generosity for those who can afford. In this regard I have received suggestions for those who are looking for the possibility of financially supporting the Parish. Should you so desire, please contact Mr Johnson David (016-7769396). He will furnish you with accounts details.

For myself, with the blessing of Fr Sebastian, the Jesuit treasurer, I have asked the parish not to pay my allowances for the months of March and April. It is the least that I can do for our beloved parish.

God bless
Padre

Ps: As soon as we are able to set up a gateway for e-payment, we will alert you.