



## **EASTER MESSAGE 2020**

### **TO THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND THE FAITHFUL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF KUALA LUMPUR**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

*This 2020 Easter will be remembered as an Easter in which we were unable to gather as one faith community, to witness and participate in the customary rituals and traditions of this Most Holy Week. An Easter in which the baptismal fonts remained empty and dry. An Easter of empty pews and silent church bells. An Easter in which we were distanced from one another physically and only united through online Mass and social media platforms. We remain comforted that even though this is an unprecedented Easter, one that has never been experienced by any one of us before, the core message of Easter remains the same year after year, that is of 'Hope'.*

These past few months have been a time of uncertainty and, for many people, hope is something that seems to be in short supply. In many ways the world and the Church are passing through dark times at this moment, and the question is how to make sense of the darkness. Nothing brings hope back to life like Easter — when Jesus triumphed over death and despair — so at this time, we choose to be hopeful and joyful, above everything else. For the Easter message gives us hope in a bewildering world and hope to face the uncertainties of the future. *"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God."* (Psalm 42:11)

As Catholics, hope is one of the most important gifts that we can give to the world today. In a world where there is often the reality of suffering, violence and injustice, we are called to be people of hope. This is not ordinary human hope. This is the hope that comes to us through the Resurrection of Jesus. In the face of sadness, difficulty and pain, we are called to look to, and rely on, the resurrected Jesus, and not just on our own strength and resources. We are the Church that tells the story of divine tragedy and hope to ourselves, to each other and to the communities around us. To those who are suffering, we are the storytellers of Hope. To those who are overcome by systems of power, we are storytellers of Liberation. To the systems of oppression, we participate in, we are storytellers of Justice. Let's tell the story Jesus would tell this Easter.

This Easter, as we are confined to our homes, let us reorient ourselves; refocus our hearts and minds on Christ; to be nourished and fed; and then to be sent out once more to the people and places of our lives, to be the Good News amidst all that people are facing in their lives so that people might discover life in all its fullness.

Crises also present opportunities – to reconsider who we are, to become more self-aware, to be more loving, more compassionate. The virus is a test – not of God but of us. It challenges us to come out of our comfort zones. The first Easter found the most faithful huddled away from their congregations, in a room, hiding out with a different fear. Instead of a pandemic, the disciples were afraid of the religious and political authorities who had crucified Jesus and were likely coming after them too. The Resurrection of the Lord must revive our weakened hope and our shaky trust. Easter invites us not to be locked into ourselves, but to listen to God and to see Him speaking and accompanying every man, woman and child with the offer of His love and of eternal life. *“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”* (Romans 5:3-5)

In this time in which we are not able to encounter Christ in the assembly or in the Eucharist, we always have the opportunity to encounter Christ in the vulnerable. We can all do something, for someone, in this time. Many things have been cancelled because of COVID-19 but love and compassion are not among them. Do what you can to help others, especially the elderly, the disabled, the poor and the isolated, and do not close your hearts to the homeless and the migrants who are suffering more than others. Keep your heart open to all those in need. Intercede for them, connect with them through prayers or a phone call.

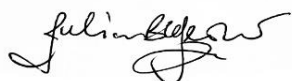
My hope and prayer for all of us this Easter is that, even if we feel trapped in what feels like an enduring exile, we shall have faith that love will triumph; that a life with deeper meaning is waiting for all of us. May the undying hope of Easter reach deep into the life of everyone, especially those struggling most to find hope in what seems a hopeless situation.

May we all be renewed and transformed this Easter and, in turn, renew and transform others. We, the Church, must be that beacon of Hope in our communities and in the world. May the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ inspire us to be life givers. JESUS IS TRULY RISEN! ALLELUIA!

*“We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.”* (Romans 6:9)

I wish you all a blessed and joyful Easter.

Yours affectionately,



**+ Most Reverend Julian Leow Beng Kim**  
**Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur**  
**April 12, 2020**