

2015 Easter message

WORDS • Archbishop Denis Hart



PICTURE BY CNS/JESSICA RINALDI, REUTERS

Dear Friends,

Emptiness is a way of life for far too many people.

Stroll through the streets of Melbourne's Central Business District and one still sees the tragedy of those who make their home on the streets and who live in the shadow of our affluence.

Thank God for the Vinnies and their soup vans who respond to this need everywhere and every day.

Emptiness is also hunger that needs satisfying daily. Thank God also for this year's Caritas Project Compassion, which reminds us powerfully of our responsibility to give 'Food for Life' to the vast numbers of people on our rich planet who hunger and thirst for justice.

And what can the rest of us do? Perhaps a start might be to pay more attention to the 'spiritual hungers' all around us.

Emptiness so often just simply shows itself in loneliness and in the absence of meaningful relationships for many people with whom we mix.

The isolation that results is a kind of emptiness that eats away at so many people inwardly. Ironically, we can even be lonely in our 'internet age' when communication seems all so easy!

How then are we to escape from this emptiness that so often dominates our lives?

Perhaps the 'empty tomb' of Easter can show us a way forward.

Remember the story from John's Gospel? Mary of Magdala goes to Jesus' tomb and discovers it is empty. She is distraught.

Jean Vanier, the writer and theologian, who has done so much to empower those living with disabilities, says that Mary represents each one of us. Like her we run here and

there frantically, each one of us, totally alone, feeling empty, wailing and weeping for the key to peace, in search of a dead body.

But Jesus our Lord is risen.

Our Risen Lord invites us to follow him out of the 'empty tombs' of our loneliness, isolation and selfishness and, therefore, the message of our Risen Saviour who has gone before us is luminously crystal clear.

Do not be afraid of the emptiness in life, for it is an emptiness that only he, the Risen One, can fill. An emptiness that he wants to fill by making his home in us.

Yes, there is so much emptiness in our culture, in our cities and even in our parishes and families. But this Easter, we are sent with Mary of Magdala and the first disciples on a special mission.

May we, in the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, rediscover the Lord's presence in the midst of our empty hearts. May we reach out to the lonely and those trapped in all sorts of 'empty tombs'—with the joy of our faith.

For Jesus, our Lord, is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia! ☩



PICTURE BY FIONA BASILE



Watch Archbishop Hart's Easter message on the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne website, www.cam.org.au.