

Heart and mind – giving life to others
Bishop Justin Bianchini's 2017 Easter Message
Diocese of Geraldton

You may have read in The West Australian newspaper earlier this year, a special story of a little two year old called Jasmine who received the gift of a heart transplant in 2016.

The whole story is extraordinary really. At eight months old, in late 2015, Jasmine had trouble breathing. She was placed in an induced coma and rushed from Broome to Princess Margaret Hospital in Perth. Her condition was so bad that her parents, Jo and Dale, were told she needed a heart transplant to survive.

The family had to relocate to Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital where Jasmine was hooked up to a 160 kg machine to keep her heart pumping while awaiting a new one.

Back in Perth this year, and at the age of two, Jasmine is just so well. Her mother Jo said "She doesn't walk – she runs – and whenever you turn your back she's up to no good. She is very active." What a feat or a miracle we could say. The expertise of surgeons, doctors and nurses with modern day equipment; the heroic love of the parents who thought nothing of relocating to Melbourne for their daughter's wellbeing; the generous support of the Charity 'HeartKids'; and above all, the priceless gift of another young child's heart.

The first time Jasmine's parents were told about the need of a transplant, her mother immediately thought of what it really meant, "I just broke down and cried, because I thought, what makes my little family so special to receive an amazing second chance, when this other family, who will give us the second chance, won't have one".

Yes Jasmine's story is a powerful story of life and death. I believe that this remarkable human story can help us also appreciate Jesus much more and appreciate Easter much more. In other words it can help us appreciate Jesus dying and rising – Jesus dying so that we might have life and life to the full.

Jesus' death and resurrection firstly frees us from the evil of sin. Sin affects us all, but Jesus our Saviour has come so that we might have "...salvation, through the forgiveness of our sins." (Lk 1:77)

At the Last Supper, and in every Eucharist, Jesus is saying, "Drink all of you...for this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Mt 26:28)

By passing from death to life Jesus is now able to live within us. In baptism we not only die to sin but rise to new life, the Risen Life of Christ. Imagine and reflect often on that – our crucified and Risen Lord, our Life giving Lord, living within us moment by moment. We can't feel it as we can our human heart beating, but his heart is beating just as really with love for us moment by moment.

There are few things that are more powerful than death, yet Jesus, by dying and rising, has conquered death and freed us from it – offering us all Life without end with Himself, our wonderful God and all the Communion of Saints.

These special Life giving gifts of Jesus are not meant to stop there. He wants us to be Life giving to so many other people.

When one looks back on one's life, it wouldn't take long to list the ways in which we have given Life to others – in small and big ways. Easter is a good time to think of how Jesus' dying and rising can also inspire and strengthen us to continue in 101 different ways to be Life giving to others.

May this Easter be a rich and joyful one for each of us.