

## **Bishop Gerard Holohan's 2017 Easter Message**

### **Diocese of Bunbury**

Every Easter is a celebration of why Jesus came. If you ask people today why Jesus came, there will be many answers. Some will say, for example, 'To teach us to love'; for others, the answer will be 'To make our world more just'. A critical question to understand Jesus and his ministry is: 'In what ways was Jesus different from other major religious figures?' 'What did Jesus teach that was different'?

#### ***The reason Jesus came***

Easter reminds us that Jesus came to share with us his own divine life. Through Baptism, he, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, have 'made a home' within us.[\[1\]](#)

Jesus made his purpose clear when he said [\[2\]](#)

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Jesus taught who the Christian is – someone who, through Jesus, shares God's own life. And since Jesus shares God's life through Baptism, Jesus insisted that all who believe in him be baptised.[\[3\]](#)

#### ***How can God's life affect us?***

Jesus is fully divine and fully human. If nurtured in the ways that he taught; the life, and therefore the power of God within, moves our thoughts and behaviours increasingly to express Christ-like love, compassion, forgiveness, mercy and justice.

This is well beyond what is possible through human effort alone. God's power can free us gradually of crippling human weaknesses such as selfishness, hard-heartedness and desires for vengeance.

As God's power within grows, increasingly believers will find themselves growing in self-understanding through insights from the Creator who understands them best. They will find increasing inner healing and peace.

They will find too guidance and inner strengthening for their daily lives. They will find insights into personal questions; and paths through their problems.

#### ***How do we nurture God's life within?***

Many today reduce Christianity to a kind of ethic. They see it to be about simply being 'a good person', a person who behaves in particular ways.

For Jesus, Christianity is much more. It is about growing inner peace as well as harmony with others as we draw on the power of God within to live as he taught. For this, Jesus stressed that the Eucharist is essential for it nourishes divine life. [\[4\]](#)

Anyone who eats my body and drinks my blood has eternal life ...

... if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Not understanding why Jesus came, many see prayer and the sacraments, including the Eucharist, merely as spiritual options. For Jesus, on the other hand, Christians who do not receive the Eucharist suffer spiritual malnutrition.

They lack the inner empowerment to love and to do good in the ways Jesus taught. This will affect their married and family lives; their self-understanding and their inner freedom as people.

### ***An empowering faith***

Easter reminds us that Jesus taught Christianity as an *empowering* faith. The vision behind his teachings is about who we can become as we nurture the life of God within.

### ***Conclusion***

I wish each of you the faith to open yourselves even more to the life of the Risen Lord, present in you through Baptism.

[1] John 14:16, 23

[2] John 10:10

[3] Matthew 28:19; John 3:5-6

[4] John 6