

*Dear Friends in Teams*

*During these times when we might be feeling isolated from our extended families, friends and even our Team members, the importance of “Staying Connected” could never be stronger. How much we yearn for being with people and how much we miss our regular catch up with Team members at our monthly Team meetings.*

*To help maintain our Team Spirit and connectedness with our Team members across the ACT/NSW Region, we will be regularly emailing you special editions of the Magnificat outlining a diverse range of resources that Team members in our Region are using for this purpose. Some of these resources you will be aware of and perhaps even currently using but others you may not have come across.*

*We trust you will find these resources useful and please send us your own suggestions so that we can pass them on to other Team members.*

*Take care, pray and keep in touch with Team members by phone and email and our Team Spirit will be as strong as ever.*

### **A Reflection for Our Times – for us to pray**

This evening before retiring, cast a thought

To when we will once again join the road of living.

To when we will hug each other again,

To when going shopping all together will be like a celebration.

Share a thought for when we can go back to having a coffee together,  
the chats, the conversations, the selfies all squeezed against each other.

Let us ponder when all this will be a memory and normality will seem an  
unexpected and beautiful gift.

We would love all that, until today, seemed to us as futile.

Every second will be precious.

The swims at the beach, long sunny days, brilliant sunsets, raising a glass to life,  
the laughter.

To when we will return to laughing together.

Strength and Courage

**Pope Francis**

## Online Masses

By now you will probably have tried our local daily Mass online that is being celebrated by priests from the Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocese.

[www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online/](http://www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online/)

In the case of one Team, some couples have been watching Mass streamed at the same time and have been texting a 'peace be with you' at the Sign of Peace. Another idea is at the time of Communion, members pray *An Act of Spiritual Communion* such as:

My Jesus,  
You are really here in the Blessed Sacrament.  
I love You more than anything in the world,  
and I hunger to receive You.  
Since I cannot receive Communion at this moment,  
feed my soul at least spiritually.  
I unite myself to you now as I do  
when I actually receive you.  
Never permit me to be separated from You.  
Amen.

As we celebrate online Mass during Holy Week, let us really live these significant moments in our homes. Fr Ricardo, Spiritual Advisor to the International Leading Team, suggests that at the time of communion we could share the family food as a symbol of the presence of the Lord among us who gathers us, speaks to us, encourages us and invites us to truly become children of God and members of the ecclesial community.

**The Daily Mass readings** can be found at [www.universalis.com/1100/mass.htm](http://www.universalis.com/1100/mass.htm)

## Online Daily Prayer & Meditation Sites.

Two popular online Prayer sites are available from the Jesuits. Both offer a daily 10-15 minute time for prayer and reflection.

- The Irish Jesuits have produced a Sacred Space, comprising a Scripture reading and points of reflection, as well as a weekly topic enhanced by six steps of prayer and reflection: The Presence of God, Freedom, Consciousness, The Word, Conversation and Conclusions.  
[www.sacredspace.ie/](http://www.sacredspace.ie/)
- The English Jesuits have produced Pray As You Go - daily prayer session, designed to go with you wherever you go, to help you pray whenever you find time, but particularly whilst travelling to and from work, study, etc.

This prayer session combines music, scripture and some questions for reflection.

[www.pray-as-you-go.org/](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/)

Quite different and sometimes controversial, **Richard Rohr's meditations** have been used by some Team members over the last few years. Rohr has just produced a series of 10 short meditations on dealing with the current pandemic, the first five challenging us to acknowledge the vulnerability of human life and the next five providing consolation and enabling us to meet all that it throws at us. Interesting, confronting and does make you think about your life – both physical and spiritual – as we live out our time in isolation.

Go to [www.cac.org/themes/reality-initiating-us-part-one/](http://www.cac.org/themes/reality-initiating-us-part-one/) and then to part 2 for the next 5 meditations. The meditations are held on the site

The new Oceania Teams website is a good source of inspiration, especially the new section with Reflections for us to ponder and which is currently being expanded.

[www.teamsoceania.com.au/category/reflection/](http://www.teamsoceania.com.au/category/reflection/)

Another good way to connect with other members is through Teams Oceania on Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/teamsoceania/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/teamsoceania/)

## **Some interesting sources and books to help us on our faith journey**

### **Online Newsletters**

There are many online daily or weekly Catholic newsletters dealing with contemporary issues facing our Church in today's world, and especially at this time when traditional religious practices are being impacted.

**La Croix International** is an online newsletter worth a look. La CROIX, which first appeared as a French daily newspaper in 1883, is Europe's pre-eminent Catholic daily bringing a Catholic perspective to world events, politics, science, culture, technology, economy and much more. La Croix boasts about being for post-Vatican II Catholics and those who are passionate about how the living Christian tradition engages, shapes and makes sense of the burning issues of the day in our rapidly changing world. .

<https://international.la-croix.com/>

**The New York Review of Books** has reached out to far-flung contributors for its Pandemic Journal, with dispatches from Madrid, Ethiopia, Dublin, Tel Aviv and beyond. In the words of Anastasia Edel, writing from Oakland: "The one thing that's worth stockpiling is decency... Decency won't save us, but it will make our altered lives more tolerable, come what may."

**Harry Hartog Booksellers** is offering several types of service which may be helpful: orders can be placed on (02) 6232 5832, with home delivery to select areas. Hartog's will even prepare a curated list of suggested titles for you to read over the coming months. [www.harryhartog.com.au/](http://www.harryhartog.com.au/)

**Garratt Publishing** in Victoria is always a great source of interesting faith-based Christian books to help while away the hours during this period of social isolation. As David Hugan, CEO of Garratt Publishing, recently wrote:

- We must now find ways in which to connect with our faith in new, enriching, ways. This may include setting aside more time for prayerful reflection.

The team at Garratt Publishing has curated a range of great titles that are sure to aid your personal reflection and prayer in the challenging weeks ahead. Simply visit [www.garrattpublishing.com.au/](http://www.garrattpublishing.com.au/)

## **A Special Meditation for Holy Week**

**Extract from the Homily from Father Ricardo Londoo, Spiritual Advisor to the International Leading Team and given at the International Teams Mass on Palm Sunday.**

In a special way this year, we must bow our heads and immerse ourselves in contemplation of what we are living, united with the Passion of Jesus. The pandemic, with its corresponding quarantines and lockdowns, leads us to consider the meaning of the weakness and fragility, vulnerability and humility, that characterizes us today.

In the text of the letter to the Philippians, Paul invites us to "have the same feelings as Jesus Christ." Let us ask ourselves calmly, but deeply: What would be the feelings of Jesus today? In the situation in which we find ourselves, with so much pain and tears, with so much suffering and death, with so much injustice and inequality: What feelings of the Lord Jesus accompany me?

We have seen very strong and moving scenes; the media bombards us day and night with photographs, videos, writings, testimonies... Nobody is unaware of what is going on. What should my feelings be?

This Palm Sunday has taken us somewhere else. This Holy Week questions us more than ever. It is no longer about celebrating the past but about living a distressing and painful present. It is not about staying closed in on ourselves but asking ourselves what we are invited to do today. As we come to the end of Lent, is our conversion truly the one the Lord wants and expects?

This week we will be in our homes in the manner of the first communities of believers who closed the doors for fear of the Jews and thus, locked up, celebrated their faith and pledged to love like Jesus. Today, we are called to relive a profound experience of faith, trust, hope and love. Once again, it is the small domestic churches, the homes, which are invited to revive the faith. It is no longer the presence of the priest at the head of the community, it is the family experience that makes being a missionary disciple of Jesus alive and effective.

For the full text of Fr Ricardo's homily go to

[www.teamsoceania.com.au/2020/04/05/palm-sunday-international-teams-mass-celebrated-by-father-ricardo-londoo-spiritual-advisor-to-the-international-leading-team/](http://www.teamsoceania.com.au/2020/04/05/palm-sunday-international-teams-mass-celebrated-by-father-ricardo-londoo-spiritual-advisor-to-the-international-leading-team/)

In our next issue of *Magnificat: Staying Connected* we will have a close look at using Zoom and Skype for Team Meetings and other ways of keeping our Team Spirit well and truly alive over the coming months.

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