

Letter to St Patrick's Parishioners

14th April 2020

Letter № 4

Dear Parishioners

Happy Easter to all. While our Holy Week and Easter ceremonies were somewhat curtailed last week, we hope and pray that you could still connect with family and friends even while remaining at home. Keep checking the parish website for the latest information and aids to prayer and reflection for Easter as we work through the coronavirus pandemic.

Have you noticed via emails and social media the swarm of jokes and comedy on the coronavirus? Comedy is funny largely because it is true. Human beings soon turn to comedy in order to cope with tragedy. It's a natural part of our response when the world is in bad shape.

There have not yet been any jokes about St Corona, the patroness of plagues and pandemics. Corona, Latin for 'crown', is also the name of a second century martyr. St Corona is closely associated with St Victor. Together, the two were put to death by Roman soldiers around the year 170 AD. The dates and locations of their martyrdom are unclear. Most sources say it was in Syria, then under Roman rule. Some say Damascus; others, Antioch. Their feast day is 14th May. We may still be in some sort of lockdown on this date, so it's worth remembering. This year, it will be on a Thursday. Most historians agree that Sts Corona and Victor died during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD). Victor and Corona were put to death by order of a Roman judge named Sebastian. The Italian city of Anzu is right smack in the middle of the current coronavirus pandemic. There is a basilica in Anzu where the relics of St. Victor and St. Corona have been preserved since the ninth century. There is also a church of St. Corona in Austria. Corona was a teenager and married. She and her brother-in-law, St. Victor, were martyred in a grizzly fashion. Remember that the lives of the very early martyrs were often written many decades after they died. The authors liked to embellish and sensationalise so as to increase devotion to them and boost the faithful's admiration and their shrine's coffers. Think of our own parish patron, St Patrick, whose life story has been filled with lots of odd things, snakes and green beer included.

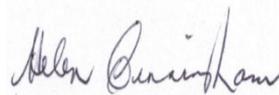
We suggest a good place to start understanding the Easter season is Luke 24:13-35, which we often call the "Road to Emmaus". The story has many layers. One such layer is the interplay between the sense of great loss and despair the apostles felt at the death of Jesus and how their hearts were opened to another possibility, that is, that Jesus was alive and with them. After sharing a meal with one they thought was a stranger who blessed them and unravelled the Scriptures for them, they exclaimed in excitement after he left: 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?' (Lk 24:32).

The story of what the life, death and resurrection of Jesus meant for the world is given to us in the Acts of the Apostles. From now, for fifty days, until Pentecost, the first reading on Sundays is from the Acts. It is the story of how the apostles rock solid faith in the Risen Jesus gave birth to the Church and how they then spread the message of salvation to the ends of the world.

Yours sincerely



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Parish Priest



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