

Letter to the Diocese from Bishop Andrew

Posted on April 17, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Now what?

Amid the joy, the exultation, the triumph of Easter Day, the realisation that God has acted, that life has triumphed over death, and indeed, that Jesus is Lord, the first Christians must have asked themselves that question. What is next? What do we do now, in this new reality that we find ourselves? What is the right response – knowing what we know – for the days and weeks ahead? (They did not consider years!)

In hindsight, when the realization that the COVID-19 crisis was becoming a pandemic and we started scrambling to adapt our practices and plans to keep people safe, perhaps you, like me, thought, “Let’s just get to Easter!” And now that we have journeyed through Lent and walked with Jesus through the events of Holy Week and celebrated the glorious Sunday of the Resurrection, we are happy and grateful... and a little bit at loose ends. We are still officially in the Easter season, and the celebration continues, but the reality is that we are now in a “new normal,” and business as usual will look very different for the near future. What do we do now, in this new reality that we find ourselves?

“How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” laments the Psalmist (137:4). Indeed, the coming weeks may be more challenging than the first, as we get used to doing things differently in this new normal, which may last longer than we had originally thought. Some changes – I’m not sure which – may end up being permanent. And there is a grief there that needs to be acknowledged with that.

Yet, like those first Christians, we are an Easter people. We are full of good news to share! And now we wait on the Holy Spirit to infuse and guide our next steps to spread the gospel to a waiting world. God has gifted us this Easter with hearts compelled to share it.

Boldness is one of our [stated diocesan values](#). Now is the time to let loose with bold proclamations of the Easter message, using both old tools and new tools, building community, acting with compassion, preaching life.

We work now towards a day when this particular exile will be a memory, but we will have sung the Lord’s song throughout, so that the words and music are not forgotten.

Tell the story, share the message. Be of good courage.

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil

Bishop of Toronto

P.S. Because the current situation is unchanging, and because the diocesan staff are helpfully providing a weekly Q&A bulletin, I may reduce the number of letters that I personally send each week. But be assured that I will be communicating regularly.