

Richard



Bishop of Arundel & Brighton

PASTORAL LETTER
for the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time
5th July 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Lord's invitation in today's Gospel: "Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest" strikes a particular chord in our minds and hearts as we are able to gather once more for the celebration of the Eucharist.

I know this will be a cause of joy for us all, for every parish community, for every religious community, for every priest, for every deacon. Despite the various restrictions that must continue for the time being, the possibility of being together for Mass and receiving the Lord in Holy Communion is a blessing beyond description. We find rest as we listen to the Scriptures, as we respond to the invitation to be one with the Lord in Holy Communion and, therefore, one with our brothers and sisters.

We might be very conscious that, because of present restrictions and the need of many in our community to continue self-isolating, numbers are fewer – but the celebration of Mass today and through the week will bring particular hope.

It will certainly be the case that so many at this time will be tired from their labours and carry so many burdens – especially those who have suffered the pain of bereavement. Anxieties remain, in all sort of ways for so many. The Lord Himself comes to us in these times and calls us to rest in Him. It is this rest in Christ that truly restores us and, despite tiredness, instils new energy.

As we emerge from these last months and even though we do not know how long restrictions and difficulties will continue, the time is right to prepare for new opportunities, to look to the future with the hope that is the mark of the Christian. In these last weeks, many will have found a different pace of life, a more prayerful way of being. Across our Diocese, a great number have been nourished by prayer together in new ways and responded to various opportunities to serve others.

We are entering a significant and grace-filled time in the life of the Diocese. This is a moment when we must be open to new possibilities and, where this is right, changes that will strengthen our response to the call that we have received.

It may be early days for us to reflect on the future life and mission of our parishes, but the call to be disciples has, perhaps, never been more urgent. Our celebration of the Eucharist and the prayer that enriches our relationship with Christ is the foundation of this reflection. Let us work together to explore the ways in which we can be the communities of saints that we must strive to become. Although there continues to be many uncertainties in the coming months, we have much to offer to the world – nothing less than the encounter with Christ who is life.

With every Blessing,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

Bishop of Arundel & Brighton