

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Difficulties and challenges come to us in ways we do not always expect. At international and national level – and for so many in the present times at a very personal level – we find ourselves in the continuing struggles of the Covid-19 pandemic. While there are signs of change, there is still some way to go. No one would have sought this – but it is where we are, in a place that is uncomfortable, trying, deeply sad in many ways – a place is dis-ease.

Abraham found himself in a place of distress – called to sacrifice his only son. He trusted. Isaac was, as it were, plucked from the jaws of death and Abraham's succession assured. There was new life. Isaac foreshadows Jesus, in a sense. Jesus is the only son of the Father. Jesus IS put to death – but there is new life. Abraham is provided with a sheep for the sacrifice. Jesus, the Lamb of God dies for us; dies that we might have life.

Today's Gospel is deeply significant. In the transfiguration, the apostles are given a glimpse of what is to come. Jesus will be put to death and He will rise again (as He tells them on the way down the mountain). This experience of the transfiguration strengthens the apostles for what is to come – it takes them beyond – to the hope that is Jesus' gift to us.

Sometimes our lives can seem like mountains – an uphill struggle in a place in which we may feel uncomfortable. Yet Jesus is with us. What is more, He shows us the way we must follow and the promise and hope that he gave to Peter, James and John He gives to you and to me. Life is ours – it is Jesus' gift to us.

In this great season of Lent, let us be open to the love that He gives freely – that love that is forgiveness, the gift of prayer, the wonder of the eucharist, the life of the Church that he calls us to share with the whole world.

This love has been the theme of our diocesan mission – 'Invited' during this last week. May we continue to journey together – as the apostles journeyed with the Lord - growing ever more deeply in our understanding and openness to His love that is our very life.

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