



**CHRISTIAN
LIFE COMMUNITY
SOUTH AFRICA**

April 2020

MASITHETHE

A Holy Week message from the National Exco

As we journey through Holy Week we are invited to celebrate the Passion in a new way. On the surface, this invitation feels more like a command: we are legally mandated to stay at home and pray the liturgy before our screens. But what is the invitation for us within these constraints? Colleen and Sabie have shared with us their own reflections, and we, as the National Exco invite you to reflect upon your own invitation and the invitation to us as CLC in this time.



Elizabeth Wang

While our view is in some ways narrowed as we stay within our homes, there is perhaps a greater sense in which we walk the Passion this year not as individuals, but with the world in its suffering. As we live the Passion of Christ, we are invited in a special way to stay present to the suffering of the world. To acknowledge that some times call for lament, not explanation, and that God laments with us. It is a moment to reflect on Pope Francis's invitation to an active and resilient faith; a faith that does not just have Jesus in the boat with us, but calls upon Him constantly and trusts that He is with us. And as we move toward the great Feast of the Resurrection, we are invited, as Colleen shares, to bask in the warmth of Christ's Light and to share with our suffering world, the love, hope, and joy that the resurrected Christ brings us.

**Angels, roll the rock away.
Death, yield up thy mighty prey.
See He rises from the tomb,
Glowing with immortal bloom!**

At our last meeting, the National Exco agreed that along with our prayers, we would like to offer a small contribution to South Africa's COVID-19 response. We have decided to provide a donation of R1500 to support the work of a relevant NGO. Suggestions of relevant projects are welcome.

We would also like to offer our special prayers to all the essential workers within our community: you go forth with our prayers and deep gratitude!

**The National Exco would like
to invite you to an online
Easter Celebration!**

Join us on Zoom on Easter Monday at 10am for a short time of prayer and community.

Meeting ID: 102 782 959
Password: 872450

The full invitation link and further instructions are at the bottom of the email that you received with this Masithethe.

Living the Passion, Death and Resurrection in the time of Covid-19

Reading the story of the suffering servant and reflecting on it alone, is a challenge but not much more than the lockdown challenge. As I read each line of this reading, I find myself wondering why, I have been gifted with life, why am I still precious to God that I have the privilege of Faith? I can't claim that my answer is applicable to all, but I know that even those of us who don't go to church regularly are complaining about the closures.

Suddenly we all want to go to church, we miss the liturgies which were taken for granted not so long ago! That first Sunday when Holy Communion was under one species, I caught myself complaining. And then I remembered that, that was how we grew up in my home parish in the 1970s. Then came the second Sunday, many had already chosen to socially (read physically) distance themselves, the parish was half empty. Then came that day when it was announced that mass will no longer be possible due to restriction of numbers. That was louder than any thunder or classroom noise! The silence that followed that hit me was so dreadful.

I then thought back to my very first silent, Ignatian retreat. The silence at La Verna was so deep and sacred but also full of life. Now we all must face a Triduum without parish rites and rituals. I now must create a real place in my heart and hearth. In the words of a meme on Facebook (slightly paraphrased): Let us never again take for granted any liturgy, any meeting with friends, all are privileges! May all our prayers lead us to a more united response to all we are missing now and need. If we indeed have reduced our carbon footprints around the world may we tread more carefully at the resurrection. May we truly appreciate the blessing God sends our way.

Happy Easter everyone, from Malesabe Sabie Makgothi.

Rabbouni... Christ our Light

Greetings from me in lockdown in my home in Port Elizabeth to all of you in lockdown in your homes!

The accompanying artwork by Sister Pauline McGrath O.P. depicts well my present state of mind and being as I live Holy Week in lockdown and look forward to celebrating the Feast of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

At times I am like the woman weeping, focusing on the darkness and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. My fear gets the better of me and my prayer becomes a list of: "Please, Lord, keep my loved ones safe, especially my sister who nurses in ICU, and my parents who, because of their age, are in the vulnerable category. And may I stay healthy as well. And please help all the homeless to find a place in one of the emergency shelters". There is nothing wrong with such prayers, but when I say them focusing on the darkness of the COVID-19 "tomb", I become anxious, and feel far away from the love, hope and light of Jesus.



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However, when I choose to invite Christ our Light, to be with me in lockdown, then I feel the warmth of Christ's light shining on me. I am grateful as Christ's light guides me while I work online, warms me in my times of relaxation, and fills me with truth, hope, love and trust in my prayer-times. When I consciously focus on Christ our Light, my daily life and my prayer interweave so tightly that I cannot see where one begins and the other ends. When I abandon myself and my loved ones into the care of Christ Our Light, I experience an increase of love and hope which helps me persevere through the limitations of lockdown and opens my heart and mind to all that Jesus has to teach me each day.

May Christ our Light be your source of love and hope this Holy Week, and as we look forward to the Triduum, may Christ, our Light fill you with the joy of the Resurrection. As Mary Magdalene encountered the Risen Jesus that first Easter morning, may you, too, hear Jesus call you by name as you gaze on your *Rabbouni* – Christ, our Light.

Colleen Callahan