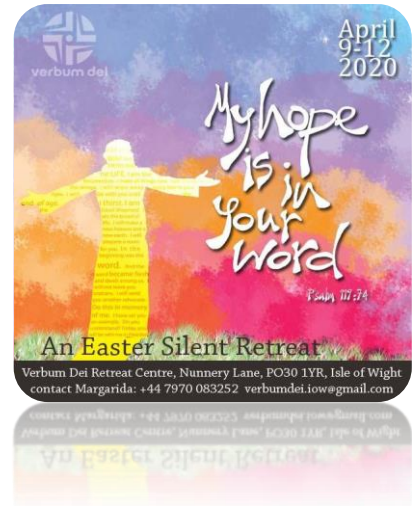


'In Hope we were saved...' (Rom 8:24-25)

Mt 7: 21-27 "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."



1 Corinthians 13:13 'These remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of them is love.'

'The storm we live in, exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, projects, habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our pre-packaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly 'save' us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to conform adversity.'

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that blessed common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

Pope Francis continued, 'we did not listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world... thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick...' (Pope Francis, Extraordinary Moment of Prayer, St Peter's Basilica, 27 March 2020)

Jn 6: 63-71 'The words I've spoken are spirit and they are life... Lord, to whom shall we go?... only you have words of eternal life...'

Jn 15:5 'I am the vine, you are the branches... Separated from me you can do nothing.'

Jn 8:31-32 'If you make my word your home, you will be my disciples, you will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free.'

Mt 12:34 'Out of the abundance of the heart (spirit), the mouth speaks. The spirit of man is dead in sins, the Spirit of Truth, working through man, is eternal life. Everything we speak, think and do will attest to what the abundance of our heart brings forth; and that is only according to the will of God.'

2 Corinthians 4: 7-18 'But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. for one momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory...'

Jn 12:23 'My soul is troubled.... Whoever serves me must follow me...'

Lk 9:23 'Take up your cross every day and follow me.'

Rev 1:17-18 'Do not be afraid: it is I, the First and the Last; I am alive forever and ever and I hold the keys of death and of Hades.'

Col 2: 14-15 'He has wiped out the record of our debt to the law, which stood against us, He has destroyed it by nailing it to the cross; He has stripped the sovereignties and ruling forces... then never let anyone criticise you for what you eat or drink, for festivals... the reality is the body of Christ.'

Questions for Reflection:

- What stops me from allowing God to be more present through my life?
- How can I be more grounded in God's hope?
- What obstacles impede me from nourishing and nurturing my life and mission in this world?

Numbers of our Catechism of the Catholic Church about: Christ's descent into hell

CCC 632 ...This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent into hell: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Saviour, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there.

CCC 633 Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, "hell" - Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek - because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God... Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.

CCC 634 "The gospel was preached even to the dead." The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfilment... The spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption.

*CCC 635 Christ went down into the depths of death so that "the **dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.**" Jesus, "the Author of life", by dying destroyed "him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and [delivered] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." Henceforth the risen Christ holds "the keys of Death and Hades", so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."*

Today a great silence reigns on earth, a great silence and a great stillness. A great silence because the King is asleep... God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. . . He has gone to search for Adam, our first father, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow Adam in his bonds and Eve, captive with him - He who is both their God and the son of Eve. . . "I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. . . I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead." (Ancient Homily for Holy Saturday)