



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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07 July 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Today's decision to place metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire areas back into Stage 3 lockdown for the next six weeks from 11.59pm Wednesday 8 July is sobering news. It is truly disheartening, and will bring renewed distress to so many families and individuals.

These words from Psalm 22 have come immediately to my mind (words that were on the lips of Jesus as he was crucified): *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.* (Ps 22.1-2)

Yet, I want to encourage you in grace, trusting in the abiding closeness of our loving Lord, who promised to be with us always.

In returning to Stage 3 restrictions in those specific areas, sadly the public celebration of Mass, which we have only just re-commenced, will need to go back to live-streaming; churches will need to be closed again to any private prayer; and the numbers allowed for funerals and weddings will be severely limited.

We expect specific details around the restrictions will be released by the civil authorities over the next 24 hours, and will be communicated to you as soon as possible. I ask for your patience in the meantime.

Now is a time for attentiveness to the care of one another. In the face of our own despondency and fears, our fatigue and anxieties, may we learn to hold firm in faith and hope, and experience sustaining moments of love. As the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews encouraged: *Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works.* (Heb 24.10)

Friends, while the Psalmist knew struggle and pain, there were also words of confidence that came from the heart: *In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.* (Ps 22.4-5)

May our Lord Jesus be with you, and may His Blessed Mother accompany us all.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,
Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne

