



PASTORAL LETTER

**for all the faithful and religious
in the Archdiocese of Caceres for the Holy Week 2020**

*“The waves of death rose about me.
The pains of the netherworld surrounded me.
In my anguish I called to the Lord,
And from his holy temple he heard my voice.”
(Psalm 18:5-6)*

My dear Faithful and Religious of the Archdiocese of Caceres,

Psalm 18 can easily be the prayer of our community in these trying times. As we count the days before the beginning of Holy Week, and with the lingering Covid-19 epidemic, we continue to experience uncertainty and anxiety. We are fearful of what the coming days bring about to our communities. We cannot seem to stem the destructive tide of Covid-19. Added to this mayhem is the continuing confusion and arrogance of some of our leaders. Likewise, the hard headedness of some of our people is appalling. No wonder the transmission of the virus remains unhampered. With these situations we easily become frustrated, angry and even fall into despair.

And so we ask: Are we that helpless? Are we that isolated? Do we allow our hearts to grow faint unable to muster strength and courage? Has no one come to our side and save us? My brothers and sister return to Ps. 18 above and read: “ In my anguish I called to the Lord, and from his holy temple he heard my voice.”

The coming memorial of the Paschal mystery (Passion, Death and Resurrection) is the remembrance of the darkness that once covered human history. But that darkness was only temporary. After three days of heavy darkness, LIGHT had been restored. LIFE had been reborn. The Risen Christ had dispelled the darkness as He did during his birth. And having offered Himself on the cross for sinful humankind, the Risen Christ had gifted us with New Life. And so at Holy Mass we say: “ We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.”

Though we celebrate Holy Week in our homes with our families, and with certain liturgical limitations, still let us celebrate with deep reverence and piety. Set aside whatever may distract us as we participate in our celebration through media (Social Media, TV, radio). Always remember Jesus telling us: ‘where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in their midst.’ (Mt. 18,20). It’s time for us to reflect on our families as Domestic Church that provides a foundation for the continuation and strength of the Church among lay faithful. (*Lumen Gentium, 11*). It is a family that is a Church, that prays and the source of works of charity.

This is an opportune time my dear faithful to RENEW our faith in Jesus who offered His life to us. The Holy Week invites us to examine how we live our Christian faith and lives. This is the time to go back to God.

As we participate at the Holy Week celebrations through media, let us not forget to pray for the eradication of this epidemic. We pray for our health front liners, soldiers and police, media, health agencies, and all those who continue to facilitate our basic needs. We pray for the victims of this epidemic, and for their grieving families. We pray for those who struggle to survive in the hospitals. We pray for the LGU officials that in their hard work, they may safeguard the order and proper implementation of health precautions. We also pray for our

social communication volunteers whose efforts make our Church celebrations present to every families through various media.

I enjoin our Religious communities to have vigil prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Your prayers are powerful.

Jesus gave us the message of true love through the cross. Let us share the message of sacrificial love through our charitable works especially towards the poor, the elderly and most vulnerable. Let us not think of ourselves first. Let us help one another.

We continue to follow the instructions from our national government and LGUs. This is also a concrete way of doing charity towards our neighbors. Our Social Action Center (SAC) and Chancery are tasked to assist our parishes in helping those in need. We welcome the LGU and private initiatives to help our people.

My dear faithful and Religious, be assured of my prayers and blessings for your families, and your homes.

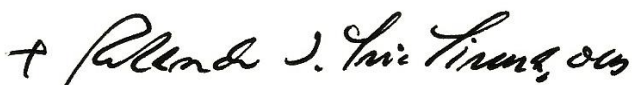
COVID-19 should not stop our meaningful celebration of Holy Week. In our Archdiocese, in our parishes, in our homes, together we loudly proclaim: "The Lord is Risen! Alleluia!"

O Divino Rostro, save us from this epidemic!
Our Lady of Penafrancia, protect us with your maternal mantle.
St. Joseph, guardian of the Holy Family, pray for us.
St. Raphael, the Archangel, pray for us.

AMEN!

God bless us all!

Christi Sumus,


✠ **ROLANDO J. TRIA TIRONA, OCD, DD**
Archbishop of Caceres
Pilgrim City of Naga, Philippines
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