

March 16, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As cities and towns continue to limit social contact, as parish life continues to be reduced and even suspended, please allow me to offer these few words for reflection.

Separation, especially separation from loved ones, is always difficult. To paraphrase what others have said, "separation is a type of crucifixion." Yet, as Christians who are physically separated from each other and consequently separated from the Lord's table we can remind ourselves that the fibers of mutual care and love have not been severed. If anything, being apart from one another offers us the possibility to understand the other more clearly which in turn allows us to see the other as a precious gift never to be taken for granted. Separation from the Liturgy offers us the possibility to see that our coming together as the Church is an act of love for the one who loved us first and not an act of thoughtless habit or obligation.

Because of Christ's crucifixion separation is not the final outcome. The destruction of death is the destruction of separation. Indeed, God has made Christ – crucified and risen – the one who gathers everyone and everything, "things in heaven and things on earth," into himself (Ephesians 1: 10).

The days ahead are destined to bring us face to face with trials and tribulations. But as we pass through them we must remember that in Christ we are not alone. Our contact may be limited but we can still check in on each other, call one another and in prayer embrace one another. In Christ we are one body for God has made him "the head over all things for the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Father Robert