



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

April 12, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Immediately after He was baptized by John, Jesus began a journey through the Judean Desert. He walked through barren and rocky landscapes while suffering deprivation. In this journey He was tempted by the devil in every way to make His life easier, to make His existence more comfortable. He was tempted to sin.

During Lent, we the faithful meet Jesus in the desert and accompany Him through this period of challenging solitude and transformation. This year we have seen a real test of our beliefs in the way our society functions, and we have been tasked to change the way we interact with one another, and even with God. But even though illness threatens our physical forms, the disease of the mind — a meanness of spirit — is ever more threatening. It menaces our lives here on Earth and in what is yet to come.

We are daily challenged to battle the war of anger and a lack of charity and the temptation to despair brought about by pride and greed. When we are tested, we are tempted to wrap ourselves in familiar comforts and ignore the plight of those around us who are suffering. But this is no way to live, and it is no way to show gratitude for the life we are yet to live.

As baptized Christians, we cannot succumb to these temptations, and it is only by arming ourselves with the teachings of the Gospel that we can triumph over hate.

In order to truly appreciate all that Easter is, we have to reflect on the darkness of the crucifixion. For our salvation, Christ gave Himself over to cruelty and brutality. He suffered unimaginable pain and death. His body was placed in a humble tomb. His followers were devastated by witnessing their beloved Jesus suffer. When they went to his tomb, they found it empty. Imagine the grief, the loss, the helplessness they experienced over the next three days.

Yet, He returned to them. He walked among the disciples again and showed them that He was real flesh and blood. He let them see that the wounds inflicted by hatred and willful ignorance did not destroy Him.

We learn all of this through reading and reflection on the Scriptures. That is the way God continues to speak to us. Hopefully, during the crisis we have experienced through the coronavirus with of the lack of availability of sacraments, we can still encounter the voice of God through the scriptures.

As His modern-day disciples, we too can experience the joy of truly seeing our Lord again. We do this by embracing the love that Jesus so freely offered us, the love He encourages us to share with our neighbors. And we move forward with the brilliance of Christ shining the glorious light of faith and hope in the darkness.

In the Lord's Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert E. Guglielmo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo
Bishop of Charleston