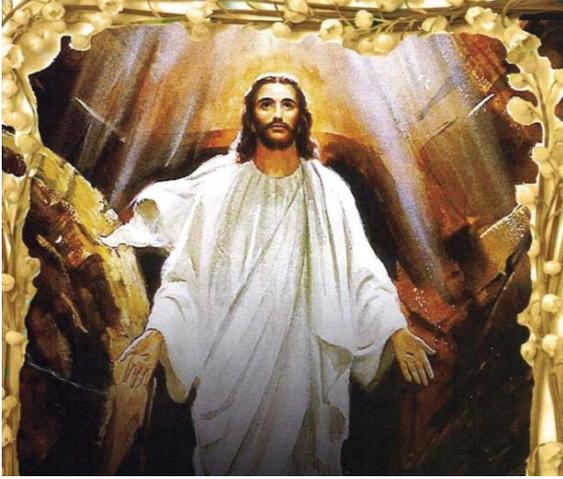


Dear Brothers and Sisters



This Easter is unlike any that the Church has ever experienced.

We are unable to gather together as a parish community to celebrate the central events of our faith.

Jesus was also alone the very first Easter.

And yet he was not alone, because God was with him.

The love of God is manifest when all seems lost. We are witnessing many acts of heroism in the face of the pandemic. This Easter Sunday I want to share one such experience with you, it is the testimony of a doctor on the front lines in a hospital in Lombardy Italy:

"Never in the darkest nightmares have I imagined that I would see and experience what has been going on here in our hospital for three weeks. The nightmare flows, the river gets bigger and bigger. At first a few came, then dozens and then hundreds and now we are no longer doctors but we have become sorters on the conveyor belt and we decide who should live and who should be sent home to die, even if all these people have paid Italian taxes for life.

Until two weeks ago, my colleagues and I were atheists; it was normal because we are doctors and we learned that science excludes the presence of God. I always laughed at my parents going to Church.

Nine days ago, a 75-year-old Pastor came to us. He was a kind man, had serious breathing problems but had a Bible with him and he impressed us that he read it to the dying and held them by the hand.

All of us doctors were tired, discouraged, psychologically and physically finished, but when we had time, we would listen to him. Now we have to admit: we as human beings have reached our limits, we can't do any more, and more and more people die every day.

We are exhausted, we have two colleagues who have died and others have been infected. We have realized that when man's capability reaches its limits, we have need of God, and we have started asking for help from Him when we have a few free minutes.

We talk to each other and we cannot believe that as ferocious atheists we are now every day in search of our peace, asking the Lord to help us continue so that we can take care of the sick.

Yesterday the 75yr old Pastor died. Yet to date, despite having had over 120 deaths in 3 weeks here and we were all exhausted, destroyed, he had managed, despite his condition and our difficulties, to bring us a PEACE that we no longer hoped to find.

The shepherd went to the Lord and soon we will follow him too if it continues like this.

I haven't been home for six days, I don't know when I last ate, and I realize my worthlessness on this earth and I want to take my last breath to help others. I am happy to have returned to God while I am surrounded by the suffering and death of my fellow men".

This is the experience of Easter.

Fr. Sean