

Archbishop Lori shares Holy Week message

Archbishop William E. Lori shared the following video message with the people of the Archdiocese of Baltimore April 17. A full transcript follows.

Dear Friends in Christ,

As followers of Christ and as members of the Roman Catholic Church, there is no period of time that more perfectly represents the essence of our faith than Holy Week. It is the culmination of our journey begun on Ash Wednesday, whereby we reflect on our humanity and consider intently our life's motivation and willingness to accept the call of Jesus Christ to leave all that we have - to empty ourselves - so that we might become his disciples and carry his message of forgiveness and unconditional love to a troubled world.

Facing as we are a decisive moment in the life of the Church, we know and must assert that the worst elements that define this crisis did not ultimately define us as baptized and redeemed daughters and sons of God our Father.

This is not to say that we do not accept the harsh and indisputable facts as we know them, nor resist acknowledging the colossal failings that have brought us to this point. It is that despite this crisis we have the courage to continue undaunted in our witness to the power of God's love and the abiding grace of the Risen Lord to heal, comfort and to renew us.

The long, storied history of our Church evidences periods of growth and holiness as well as times of struggle and failing. And yet, history also makes clear the purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has never been tainted. It is, this Gospel, the summons to confront our humanity with all the good and bad it entails, and to allow God's forgiveness to change us so we can accept God's invitation to begin anew.

It is also the summons to live for others - to give of ourselves in ways that inspire hope and joy and which provide comfort, care, understanding and always

forgiveness. Indeed, it is a summons to be Christ for others.

This must be our focus and our work, especially during these difficult days. We must stay together in mutual support and encouragement, bearing witness to the true essence of what defines us as followers of Jesus Christ and as Roman Catholics. As Simon Peter attests in John's Gospel: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life."

In my travels across this local Church I am constantly inspired by the lively and active faith that is so evident. In countless ways, you and your families, your fellow parishioners, our young people, those who are retired and still determined to make a difference – all of you demonstrate each and every day the presence of the Risen Lord and his Spirit among us.

Your witness is even now reinvigorating our Church, reminding us again of what is central to our faith and what it truly means to be bearers of Christ to friend and stranger alike, to our communities and to society at large. Please continue to be generous with your time and your service. You are at the heart of the Church's life and provide clear evidence that God is true and that his love abides in us.

I wish for each of you, your families and loved ones a joyous and holy Easter. Know that you are constantly in my prayers and I humbly ask that you remember me in yours.

May the Risen Lord fill us all with his strength, his redeeming love and the power of his Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ,



Archbishop William E. Lori