

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We often hear in these times: "extreme situations call for extreme measures" and this also applies to religious life during the current COVID-19 pandemic. During Holy Week and Easter there will be no public religious services in our churches, as has been the case in recent weeks. Thus, we will not have the opportunity to come together as Christians, to celebrate in community what constitutes the core of our faith: the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a painful experience that, until recently, no one would have thought possible.

Although your physical participation in the liturgies is not possible, I ask you to start a spiritual journey towards Easter. Every day there is an opportunity to participate inwardly in the liturgies transmitted from the Cathedral via the diocese live-stream, at www.cathol.lu . On Easter Sunday I will celebrate the mass broadcast in the church of Brouch / Mersch. I wholeheartedly invite you to participate in this celebration through television or the internet. All information about these celebrations and broadcasts can be found at www.cathol.lu .

Through digital platforms, many parishes are regularly making resources available for prayer, also to encourage celebrations at home, alone or with the family. I thank them very much for that.

For the **Easter Vigil**, on Saturday, April 11, 2020, I invite you all to make a significant gesture that introduces us into the Resurrection of Christ. **Please light a candle at 8 pm and place it at the door of your house, or near a window.** With this light we unite with the light of Paschal Candle. The light leads us to Christ who passed from the darkness of death to the light of new and eternal life. The Paschal Candle is a symbol of our hope, which we want to share with all those who in these times live in the darkness of uncertainty, concern, mourning or fear in the face of death. The light of the candle also unites us with men and women who, through their profession or voluntary commitment, are at the service of others and, at times, risking their lives.

I ask parish officials to **ring the bells on Easter Sunday at 12 noon for 15 minutes.** The ringing of bells invites us to join in the praise of the Church addressed to Jesus for his victory over death, and at the same time expresses our solidarity with all those who are opposed to all forms of death and who are committed in protecting life and creation.

During the ringing of bells, I ask you to pray the following prayer alone or with others:

Risen Lord Jesus,

You yourself are the Life that conquered death!

We praise you and ask you: look upon the distress and mourning of our fellow citizens, especially those who are victims of the pandemic.

Relieve the pain of those who suffer,

strengthen all those who care for them,

grant eternal rest to the deceased,

and strength and courage to us all. Amen.

We can end the prayer with the "Hail Mary" of the Angelus prayer.

Let us enter this Holy Week with great confidence and let our hearts be filled again with the hope and joy of Easter.

With my blessing, I wish you a happy and holy Easter.

Luxembourg, 6 April 2020

+ Jean Claude Cardinal Hollerich

Archevêque de Luxembourg

April 12, Easter Sunday, 12 pm: At the end of Holy Mass, the Holy Father will grant the blessing «Urbi et Orbi»

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION