

# Editorial: The one question we should ask this Easter

How glorious it is to have our churches open in the United States this Easter Sunday!

While the decision of bishops across the U.S. to close churches a year ago at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was the correct one – rooted both in prudence and charity – we are overjoyed that those who are able to do so safely can once again celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord within their parish communities.

Easter, the Catechism of the Catholic Church instructs, is “not simply one feast among others, but the ‘Feast of feasts,’ the ‘Solemnity of solemnities.’” And so we rejoice.

But we also do more. We remember in prayer our brothers and sisters around the world who are obligated to stay home for a second Easter in a row: those in Europe, the Philippines and elsewhere around the world where another wave of COVID-19 threatens yet again.

We remember those who are no longer with us, especially those who lost their lives to the virus that has so consumed our thoughts and dictated our actions in the last calendar year. And we remember all their loved ones left behind.

We remember all the sick and suffering, especially those who are alone, or who are suffering from unexplained and challenging long-term coronavirus symptoms.

We remember those on the peripheries who are easily ignored: the migrant, the refugee, the poor, the mentally ill, the unwanted baby in the womb, the forgotten, the elderly.

We remember all those affected by anxiety and the stress of a

year lived in constant uncertainty and fear, even those who might not realize it.

We remember all those suffering from violence around the world, including the victims in the horrific supermarket shooting in Boulder, Colorado; the victims of the shootings in Georgia, many of whom were Asian American; and all affected by the violent coup in Myanmar.

We remember all those suffering economically, who are dealing with unemployment or struggling to make ends meet.

We remember all those who, for one reason or another, lack the faith, hope and love that are especially present during the Easter season.

And yet we know that just remembering is not enough. Our prayers are not enough. We are called to discipleship – and Jesus told his disciples exactly what that meant. “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another,” he said. “This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:34-35).

And so, while many worthwhile books and programs exist to help us grow deeper in relationship with Christ and help us along the path of lifelong discipleship, there is one fundamental question that should be at the center of all we do as Christians: Have I loved enough?

This is a critical question for both individuals and parish communities, especially as we approach the end of this pandemic. More specifically, we might ask ourselves: Have I called the families of those who have lost loved ones from COVID-19, or in other ways, this year? Have I offered to support those who are ill by bringing them food, medicine or other provisions? Have I reached out to my brothers and sisters in faith whom I have not seen recently and invited them to reconnect with the community? Have I worked in

tangible ways for justice for all, so that all human beings may know they have inherent dignity and worth? Have I sent cheerful cards or letters to those who are alone or especially anxious? Have I actively worked for peace and against racism? Have I given generously, when able, to help those facing financial hardship? Have I shared the message of Christ with those who are separated from him?

It is indeed glorious to have our churches open this Easter Sunday: “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad!” (Ps 118:24). Yet true joy and true remembrance should compel us to act in a world made new by Christ’s resurrection.

This Easter following our Long Lent is an opportunity for each of us to recommit to living as we ought – as true disciples of Jesus Christ. It is an opportunity to love one another well.

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