



**Easter 2019**

**Homily**

**By the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB  
Archbishop of Perth**

**Easter Vigil Saturday 20 April 2019  
St Mary's Cathedral, Perth**

**Easter Sunday 21 April 2019  
St Mary's Cathedral, Perth**

On Good Friday afternoon this Cathedral was a sombre place. There were no flowers, no decorations, no uplifting music. We were commemorating the death of Jesus and as we left the Cathedral, we were contemplating an empty cross - for the body of the Lord had been laid in the tomb. The contrast between Good Friday and tonight (today) could not be greater. Now we are surrounded by beautiful flowers, glorious music and flickering candles. If on Friday we were gazing on an empty cross tonight (today) we gaze instead on an empty tomb.

The cross stood silent and empty on Good Friday evening because of the victory of the powers of death. The tomb stands empty tonight (today) because of the victory of the powers of life. We are here tonight (today) because we want to celebrate God's final and definitive answer to the problem of evil. In the resurrection of Jesus, God has given us the absolute assurance that life is more powerful than death – and that love is more powerful than hate. More than ever we need to open ourselves to this amazing truth – for it is so easy to be intimidated by the power of hatred, beaten down by the force of anger and resentment, and demoralised by our own sins and failings. These things are real of course – they are the reality of the world in which we live. But so is the power of God, and even more so. As Christians, people who believe in the resurrection of Jesus, we are people of hope. It is this hope which is the Lord's precious Easter gift to us.

As we look back over the last year and perhaps the last decade, we can indeed be overwhelmed by the many tragic events which have taken place in the Church and in our wider society. The growing culture of violence, the terrible abuse of the young and the vulnerable, the disregard for human life which seems to be gaining ground in our society, and the turmoil and suffering in so many countries, can easily tempt us to believe that hate is the stronger force; that violence is the ultimate victor; and that closing down and closing in is the only answer – but year after year we keep coming back to celebrate Easter, because the deepest part of us, the place where God can be found, simply will not let us believe that.

When the disciples first discovered that empty tomb, and a fragile flicker of hope was born in them, they began a journey which ultimately led them to encounter the risen Lord. His death had called everything into question and they had begun to lose hope. With the rising of Jesus from the dead that hope was reborn and now they could finally and fully give themselves to the new understanding of God which Jesus had opened up for them: a God of unbelievable love,



tenderness and compassion. A God not of anger and revenge but of forgiveness and mercy. A God not distant and aloof but rather closer to us than we could ever have hoped or believed.

It is this God who is close to us tonight (today). In the resurrection of Jesus, we find the final confirmation that God really is as Jesus tells us; that, in coming to know Jesus, we come to know God, who loves us so much and wants us to be in union with him so much, that he came among us as one like us, so that we could see in Jesus, and touch in Jesus, and love in Jesus, the God whom we otherwise could never have seen, never have touched, and never have truly loved.

This is the source of our hope. This is the source of our peace. Let us hold fast to Jesus, let us unite ourselves with him in this Eucharist tonight (today). Let us say to him, *"Lord Jesus, risen from the dead, spring of new life for all of us, come into our lives and into our hearts tonight (today), and fill us with that gift of peace and joy which comes from knowing that, in you, we have found the true face of the living God."*