

'Crossing the threshold of hope' penned Pope John Paul II, in his book of the same title. 26 years later, crossing the threshold of hope is the daily experience of millions of people since the outbreak of Covid 19.

Across the globe there's a continuous stepping into the hope that the virus does not infect my home, my family, or my friends. Hoping that if it does, the blessing of a full recovery is our gift. Hoping that the under pressure health care services cope with the onslaught. Hoping that doctors, nurses, paramedics and all key workers on the front line are given the resources and personal protection they absolutely deserve. Hoping that the most vulnerable individuals and groups in society receive the help and support they need, right now. Hoping that stay-at-home measures and social distancing slow down the infection and death rates. Hoping the sick recover, the dead are treated with the utmost dignity, and the bereaved are lovingly comforted.

I also hope, that the 'crossing' leads every single person to things new, profound and everlasting. That 'we' replaces 'me'; that the common good becomes the new norm; that the fruit of the current 'togetherness' is the lasting unity of people of every creed and culture.

In a former era, excited crowds crossed the threshold of hope and gathered at the entrance to Jerusalem, singing, "*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!*". Jesus, the Messiah, was their living Hope. Their longed for Hope for new beginnings, more meaningful

futures, and enlightened realisations of God's promises. The crowds sang as with one voice, together, united by one Hope.

And though their rejoicing was soon to be silenced on a hill not so far away, it was but short lived. For the 'story' unfolding for the ears of their hearts and its continuing narrative for ours too, is that by *his life, death and resurrection, Christ Jesus has purchased for us the rewards of eternal salvation* (*Salve Regina Rosary prayer*).

Embodying God's grace and mercy, Christ, the one true redeemer and saviour of the world, is ever present in all our joys and sorrows, our challenges and successes, our fears and hopes.

As we journey together, through the solemnities of Holy Week and towards the rejoicing at Easter, let us give thanks that we are so closely united with each other by our shared love of God and neighbour. And as we daily cross the threshold of hope, let us with one voice praise the source of the hope we receive, for;

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4. KJV).

May God bless you with the holiest of Holy Weeks, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen