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Letter to Grandparents

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Dear Grandparents,

The peace of Jesus Christ be with you. In the world around us growth is taking place and nature comes to life after the death of winter. Trees are just beginning to bud forth. Birds are singing and busy building their nests. Yet in the midst of all this we endeavor to cope with the chilling challenge of Covid-19 and its consequences of death, disruption and disillusionment. We are living through a very traumatic time, not just for Ireland but for the whole world. The results will be far reaching in terms of physical and psychological health and the economic situation.

I know that for grandparents, like yourselves, this is a very testing time. I am very conscious of the bond that you have with your children and grandchildren. It is a huge sacrifice not to be able to visit them or enjoy visits from them. For grandchildren this is also a very difficult time, as it is indeed for all of us. However, thanks to modern technology and social media you can still keep in touch with your loved ones.

In many respects the world has been effectively shut down. Already, however, we witness the way in which this crisis brings out the best in people. Goodness, generosity and gentleness surface in a very powerful and profound way.

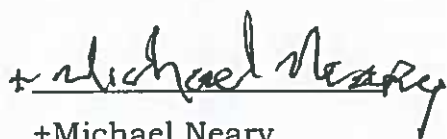
As we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we are people of hope. The hopes of the earliest disciples of Jesus Christ seemed to run aground on Calvary and be buried with him in the tomb. The events of the Middle East over 2000 years ago provide us with a perspective on our present situation. Social distancing, closed doors and fear stalk the streets and thoroughfares of cities across the world. The followers of Jesus met in fear behind locked doors. It was

to this situation that Jesus came into their midst with the words “peace be with you”. When the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples he carried the wounds of suffering, pain and death and these also remain the marks of the risen life. Prior to the onslaught of this virus we prided ourselves on the progress which humanity had made in various areas, medicine, science, technology and communication. We boasted of our maturity. Perhaps we are now beginning to realize that real maturity involves acknowledging that we are not self-reliant and that we depend on God. Easter reminds us that the God on whom we depend does not abandon us. This God enables us to take responsibility in the present and actively pursue means of containing the virus and finding a cure for it. As an Easter people we express our hope for and our belief in a new future. However, the future will have to include and make provision for the concrete memories of Covid-19 with which we cope today. Our faith in Jesus risen from the dead enables us to embrace both the honest reality of what is taking place and, at the same time, opens us to new possibilities. In the depth of helplessness our faith enables us to engage with God and trust in the Lord.

For nearly 2000 Easters, since Jesus rose from the dead, believers have been proclaiming that the tomb was empty. However, it is not the empty tomb that convinces people but rather the influence and the impact of Christ’s presence in our lives today as we respond to the challenge of the Corona Virus.

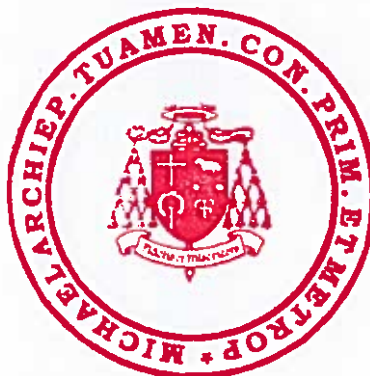
May the Risen Christ take care of you and yours wherever they may be.

Yours sincerely,



+Michael Neary

Archbishop of Tuam.



Easter 2020