



6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

New Year's greetings to you all.

I write to you having received the news that we are again in lockdown. By the looks of things, it may be for an extended period that goes beyond the month of January. Not the best start to a new year, but hopefully this will avoid things becoming much worse. Yet, with the vaccine being rolled out there is hope. We hold all those on the front line dealing with the ever-changing and challenging circumstances in our prayers.

One consequence of the new lockdown is that live, face-to-face worship, is no longer permitted, and numbers allowed at funerals and weddings are reduced. However, in this Circuit, for those of you who are on-line, there are several opportunities to continue to worship via Zoom and YouTube. I am indeed grateful to all those who have broadened their IT skills to enable this to happen. For those of you not on-line, we will continue to send information and news by regular mail.

You may have observed that this letter is written on the Feast of the Epiphany. The magi visit the Son of God. They experience the truth of Isaiah's prophecy: darkness had covered the earth – but the light has now overcome it. Epiphany is a 'light' moment.

I love that first verse of Isaiah 60: "*Arise, shine, for your light has come*". Is this not a guide for us at this time – to help us by God's grace in these gloomy times to lift our eyes to God's radiant light!

This pandemic has indeed been, and continues to be, a very testing experience. With all that is challenging it is easy to keep our heads down, our eyes facing the ground. Yet, as the magi gave their treasures, we are given a 'treasure' – an epiphany treasure. It is a gift from God that is offered to us in our preoccupations – particularly with temporary things – that will dispel the darkness. So, when we feel things are dark and formless, chaotic and confusing, Isaiah's voice reminds us to look up, and remember the indestructible link we have with God who has the power to create out of nothing, and to be born among us.

I pray that God will empower us to rise and shine; that we would be helped by God to see and share the radiance of the love, hope and peace that the magi encountered when they saw and recognised the one who is the Light of the world.

I am mindful of those who are facing health and other challenges at this time – we continue to keep them, and each other, in our prayers.

Please take care and stay safe.

Grace and peace,

*Eddie*



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