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Dear Parishioners of Our Lady's, St Anne's and St. Jerome's

The other day I was reading an article entitled 'How to deal with Pandemic fatigue'. Like everyone else, I am tired of the pandemic and the way it has dominated so many conversations and media reports. So, I was ready to receive some new wisdom about ways to deal with these Covid days. I need not have bothered! The best advice the author could offer was to be realistic about the fact that it is here and will dominate our lives for at least another year!

There is no shortage of advice about how to cope and manage in these days. Much of it is well intentioned and helpful. But it seems to veer between out and out optimism that everything will be back to normal very soon, or a doomsday scenario! Neither are helpful!

I am reminded of the words of Jesus to his disciples as he was about to leave them; 'I shall not leave you orphans'. It may seem at times that we have been left to survive on a stormy sea, listless and afraid with no help in sight. But the solution, the answer is right there before us. It is not for nothing that the chosen people came to see God as a rock, a steadfast helper, a refuge in time of distress. Time and again, God rescues and saves His people. Just when things seem to be getting worse, God shows His Face and dispels the fear and the darkness.

We are asked in the First Reading at Mass on Sunday to recognise a truth upon which we can depend; 'that all may know from the rising of the sun to its setting, that apart from me, all is nothing'. This is the only wisdom and advice we really need. The world has much to say about how we can cope with these difficult days. But it is time for us to turn to the comfort of God's word and hear it again with open hearts and minds. Our Father God is speaking to us. Let us listen to Him and be reassured that we are loved and will never be abandoned.

In the end, only this one truth will really reassure and comfort us; that God is truly everything. Without Him nothing exists. Even in the worst moments, He is close. Nothing will ever totally overwhelm us. Our refuge is deep in the palm of His Hand.

Please stay safe.

May God bless you and your loved ones.

**Father John**



**Our Lady of Compassion**

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