



St-Jérôme 2020.03.26

Pastoral Message

To you, my dear members of the Canadian Association of the Order of Malta

I have been a priest for 37 years, almost 8 years as a Bishop and without doubt twenty years in the Order of Malta. With the measures of social isolation, I celebrate the daily Eucharist without the presence of the faithful, and it is for me, each time, as an entry into a new dimension of spiritual communion. I miss the faithful; And this lack makes me think more than ever of my diocesans and you, members of the Order of Malta. Today, I understood the full meaning of this expression from Father Teilhard: "Since once again, Lord, I have no bread, no wine, no altar, I will offer you, me Your priest, on the altar of the whole Earth, the work and the sorrow of the World" (Mass on the World. 1923). Since, Lord, I do not have the presence of the faithful, I will offer You "the work and the sorrow of the World": all these people, at home and from everywhere, who watch over us through the performance of services essential; all those members of the Order who continue to work for the poor and sick.

For each of the chaplains of the Canadian Association, as in the Order of Malta around the world, the experience of spiritual union between us is intense and sincere. For a chaplain, you are his reason for living: our ministry is our life. And today more than ever, our meetings, which have become impossible for the moment, give way to the even stronger bond of our prayer accomplished in the one Holy Spirit. All members of our Association and of the Order remain in the same spiritual union.

Therefore we must first count on each other, in individual prayer and in compliance with all the measures offered to us to protect each other. There is an effort and a challenge for everyone here. With the approaching Easter, the Resurrection of Jesus taking place once and for all and forever, we will come together to joyfully celebrate a humanity that has experienced its sacred origin and its Salvation.

You receive this letter as a greeting and a blessing: I wanted to greet you as a pastor and to convey to you the Lord's blessing as a bishop. May this blessing bring you and your loved ones intimate moments of communion, hope and charity.

I will be with you soon

† Raymond Poisson
Bishop of Saint-Jérôme