



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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April 9, 2020

### “Light of the World”

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Holy Week is a certainly a unique one for us, marked by physical separation and desolation. Yet, it is also marked with hope, knowing that as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who in His own desolation carried our sins on the weight of His cross. He is with us even now carrying the weight of all of our burdens and our sufferings as He leads us to the joy of the Resurrection.

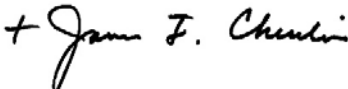
As we stand at the foot of the cross on Good Friday, we feel despair and hopelessness, but are given the gifts of new joy and new life the next day when we celebrate the greatest of all solemnities, the Easter Vigil. Beginning in darkness, the Easter Vigil marks Christ's passage from death to life as we await His return in glory. Under normal circumstances, we would prepare the blazing fire at the Easter Vigil, to experience the flames dispelling the darkness and lighting up the night. While we cannot physically prepare and light the fire at the Easter Vigil this year, I ask that you light a fire in your own hearts and be kindling for those around you, allowing God's love and power to burn more brightly in your own lives, in your own homes and in your own families, so that together we may be strengthened in our faith.

When we light the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil, we convey the truth that Christ is the “Light of the World.” This candle is the symbol of the “light of Christ, rising in glory,” scattering the “darkness of our hearts and minds.” As a symbol of our unity with Catholics throughout the world, I invite you to safely display a lighted candle in the window of your homes, like those electric candles used at Christmas, around sunset on Holy Saturday evening, to convey the truth that Christ is the “Light of the World.” As the candles are illumined, I invite you to recite the following prayer from the Easter Vigil with your families: “May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.”

Our Lord sacrificed Himself for us, and He does not abandon us in our need. We are not alone. Our mother Mary is always close by, too. She wraps us in her mantle and she hears our every prayer and intercedes for us to the Father so that we may be free from every suffering, even like those we're facing now.

Know of my love and prayers for you and your families. I miss seeing you, but know that I carry you in prayer each day. God bless you, and in your kindness, please pray for me too.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,  


Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA  
Bishop of Metuchen