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Pastoral letter to the faithful of the Diocese of Parramatta on COVID-19

Dear sisters and brothers,

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

I am sure that these words of St Paul are particularly pertinent to us as a Christian community as we endure the “second wave” of this pandemic with an increasing outbreak of the COVID-19 “delta variant.”

Having perhaps lulled ourselves into thinking that lockdowns were a thing of the past we find ourselves once again restricted in terms of our lives, and in particular, our capacity to access the Sacraments which are so fundamental to Catholic life.

I thank the pastors of our Diocese for their continuing efforts to maintain contact with the members of their parish communities, for the live streaming of liturgy, and other ways in which pastoral care is being offered particularly to those who are alone or facing other challenges.

As responsible citizens and faithful Catholics, in solidarity with our doctors and nurses, we must comply with health orders for the sake of the common good. The Gospel calls us to practice such solidarity in these difficult days.

We are also reminded that part of our identity as Catholics is our sense of engagement with one another through the celebration of the Eucharist which binds us to Christ and to those who gather with us. Whilst this communion cannot be impaired (even by a lockdown) the lack of being able to physically gather as the Body of Christ obviously can impact our sense of belonging. It is in these circumstances that we must endeavour to be sacramental to those in our families and those we are able to be in contact with by showing the face of Christ and allowing God’s love to manifest in us.

May we also use these days to deepen our prayer and spiritual lives. Our Diocesan websites www.catholicoutlook.org, particularly www.thewell.org.au contain some good and helpful information about how we can follow this path of deeper prayer, meditation and spiritual reading.

Please be assured that as your Bishop you are all constantly in my prayers, and I long for the day when once again we can express our faith tangibly by gathering in our various places of worship to celebrate the Eucharist and express that joy which comes from our faith in Jesus Christ.

Our Lady, Help of Christians, pray for us.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, pray for us.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Bishop of Parramatta**

*Given at Parramatta on 21 July 2021
The Feast of St Lawrence of Brindisi*