Checking in after Easter

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There are so many encouraging signs throughout our diocese of God at work in and through his people. In this current climate, it would be easy to become discouraged and forget the need to live out the hope we have in the crucified and risen Jesus.

The Easter season is the perfect time to reclaim that hope and to look for guidance by the Holy Spirit for opportunities to explore new ways to flourish.

Yes, the church is going through a challenging time. It is easy to feel marginalised and even despondent. We can be quick to see what we are not, to focus on what we donâ??t have, what we have lost, and how enormous the task might seem to grow a church from such a place. Isnâ??t this the same place that the disciples found themselves after that first Easter?

This is exactly the place from which Jesus entrusted those first pilgrim followers to begin. Was it easy? No. Did they have doubts? Yes. Were those first disciples given anything special or different from us to undertake this task? No.

What if God has provided all that we need to regenerate and grow his church? What if the gifts we need, the courage we need, the means to bring this about is already sitting in our pews? What if God is calling *you* to be a significant part of this renewal?

It is encouraging to hear that many of our parishes welcomed a larger number of guests to our Holy Week and Easter services this year. I encourage us to make every effort to follow up and connect with them in meaningful ways. People venture to church for many reasons at this season.

For some, they are on holiday away from their own parish. Others habitually turn up for our major festivals. Some may come at this time to blend in with the crowd but carry a burden or sadness and seek comfort or healing. Some may come yearning for real connection and community, unsure of where to start.

Let us be observant, reflective and proactive. Did they seem familiar with this experience? What might you do, gently, to enable a greater sense of welcome and connection next time? A smile? Sitting next to someone and assisting with books and pew-sheets if used? Being thoughtful about how we pass the sign of peace? Asking if you can make them a cup of coffee? Introducing them to one of your friends? Invite them to meet you for coffee in the next week? These are very simple things, but they give a strong message that we value newcomers, and we want them to come back and even find a home with us.

The article linked here is a helpful reminder of how stepping out in faith can be simple. We just need to be observant, responsive to Godâ??s call, and carry a deep yearning for regeneration in Godâ??s church.

This is the first of what I hope will be a monthly check in. I would love to share some of the good news stories of regeneration around our diocese. Please email me if you have something you would like to share. Donâ??t be shy â?? others will be blessed by your sharing.

Every blessing, Helen Phillips

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