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Easter message 2015 - The Right Reverend Stuart Robinson
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IS HOPE IN SHORT SUPPLY?

Those attending the recent Google Education Summit in Canberra named some of the things most needed for life in the 21st Century. WIFI access and battery life featured prominently. Such needs might seem trite when people in our community still struggle to have their basic needs for shelter or safety met.

As I have walked with the cross in cities, towns and villages across rural New South Wales something else appeared in short supply. Places like Wagga Wagga, Queanbeyan, Cooma, Gundagai, Holbrook, Tumut, Tumbarumba, Bredbo and Nimmitabel have a strong sense of identity and community.

In each town, I met too many people who wondered how can tomorrow be any better than today? Too many were struggling with the weight of under-employment and how to make ends meet. Too many were enduring intolerable violence at home or having to cope with the infirmity of old age. Too many children were bored with hands and hearts that seemed all too empty. In a land of plenty, it seemed that hope is in short supply.

These concerns can seem small, even insignificant when our TV screens are filled with news of triumphant politicians, wars and tumult, not to mention the despair of those who lost loved ones through accident or malevolence. Too many people are stuck in grief, loss and trauma while our world simply moves on.

On Good Friday, the family of Jesus confronted a horrific scene. Mary saw her son tried by kangaroo court, beaten half to death and hung on a cross to die slowly as a criminal. It must have been traumatic for her to see beloved boy treated this way.

The good news of Easter is that the resurrection happened. In a scientific age, we are inclined to doubt it because we look for things that are predictable and repeatable. We might doubt it also because we don't believe that happy endings ever happen. Yet, history is filled with events that could never be foreseen or explained. Love, hope and faith are never extinguished, their currents sustain us still.

For by raising Jesus from the dead to new life, God broke through our sense of hopelessness. God opened a doorway through love and invited us in. In God, those who are worried can find peace; those who are fearful can find security; those who are sick can find wholeness; and those who are bored can find purpose and direction.

Hope doesn't have to be in short supply. Easter is a new day where something most unlikely happened. This gift of hope and new life is waiting for us all.

The Right Reverend Stuart Robinson
Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn

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