

# KIT @ KIPPAX

Staying Connected while Physically Distant

Friday 8 May 2020

Today's Gospel John 14: 1-6



**Bishop Emmanuel Lafont** knows what it means for people to be deprived of the Eucharist, even in the best of times. *The 74-year-old native of Tours (France) has been bishop of the Diocese of Cayene in French Guyana since 2004. And many communities in his South American diocese sometime see a priest only once a month or less. Bishop Lafont is a Scripture scholar with a degree from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. And he had many years of missionary experience before becoming a bishop. He worked in South Africa as a fide donum priest from 1983-96, before returning to France as national director of the Pontifical Missionary Society and head of the French bishops' missionary commission.*

**Q** Many of the bishops, priests and faithful of France are anxious to resume Mass before June 2. What would you say to them?

**A** This fixation does not seem healthy to me; I even find it a little immature.

From the very beginning of the lockdown, I told my brothers "we are going to the desert", quoting the prophet Hosea (Hosea 2:16). God is speaking to us in this desert that is being prolonged.

Remember the Babylonian exile, when the Israelites lost the Temple, the sacrifices and the work of the priests. The people had only the Word and the prophets (such as Ezekiel, Jeremiah and second Isaiah, with chapters 40 to 55) and they were the ones who helped them experience this time of exile spiritually, as a time of conversion.

This period of confinement is the time to enter more deeply into the Scriptures. So it's an opportunity. And, in any case, what is two weeks more or less? I reminded the people of my dioceses that we are experiencing for only a short time what 150 million Christians - of all confessions - usually live through because they are persecuted. So this confinement is also an opportunity to live in solidarity with those Christians who are chronically unable to celebrate, which does not prevent them from living their faith. As Thérèse of Lisieux used to say:

***"No doubt it is a great grace to receive the sacraments; but when God does not permit it, it is good nonetheless, everything is a grace!"***

Finally, I would say that we can spend this month of May in the Upper Room, remaining in prayer with Mary, as Pope Francis invites us to do, patiently waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and take hold of us. We know that confinement is being relaxed, while risks of a second wave of infection are very possible, and we will have to live with this virus for many more months.

The episode of the disciples at Emmaus reminds us that without the bread of the Word, the Eucharistic bread is incomprehensible.

Extract from article in La Croix Newsletter - 4 May 2020  
<https://international.la-croix.com/news/without-the-bread-of-the-word-the-eucharistic-bread-is-incomprehensible/12296>

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