



GEREJA ST. ANTHONY

St. Anthony's Church

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

If you followed the first reading of the daily mass last week, you would have read about the challenges of the early Christians in the Act of the Apostles. The first reading on Friday (16/4) ended in these words, "*They preached every day both in the Temple and in private houses, and their proclamation of the Good News of Christ Jesus was **never interrupted.*** (Acts 5:42)" Due to the pandemic, our parish life (Eucharist, Sunday school, RCIA, cell groups, prayer meetings, ministering to the sick, meeting one another, etc) has been put on hold or interrupted. Things are not like what they used to be. Many have called this the new normal. We still do not know when we will be able to celebrate Mass together in the Church.

The Lord spoke to me through this verse and I have decided to take the initiative to find new ways and means to make sure that the spiritual needs of the parishioners can be met (other than live streaming of Sunday and daily masses). Like the early Christians of the Acts of the Apostles, we must make sure that the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus in our parish is never interrupted, especially now when we really need to be nourished by the Word of God. Therefore, I have started meeting via zoom with the different prayer groups with the hope "to fan into flame the gracious gift of God" (2 Tim. 1:6) so that like the two disciples who met Jesus on the way to Emmaus, we can also say, "Were not our hearts burning within us as He spoke to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us" (Lk. 24:32).

That is why we need to find new ways to meet and share the Word of God to strengthen and build each other up during this difficult time of the pandemic. Starting this week, we will have more and more zoom meetings for all the prayer groups to gather together as a Spirit-filled community devoted to the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus. All are welcomed to participate and join. Do not let social distancing lead us to experience emotional distancing and ultimately spiritual distancing from God and one another. Let us always remember that where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, He is present among them (Mt.18:20) and that Jesus is always with us, until the end of the ages (Mt. 28:20).

Your shepherd,

Fr. Andy Lee (Rector of St. Anthony's Church, Bintulu)
(Good Shepherd Sunday, 25th April 2021)