

## **WORDS OUT OF THE WILDERNESS**

### ***First Week of Easter***

And here we are in Eastertide, the Great 50 Days of the Easter season. Are we there yet? Are we out of the wilderness? Has Easter arrived? Easter is our celebration time, leaving our fasting and focusing on feasting, and yet... it feels like we are not there yet, still struggling and counting down the days until Holy Week, until Easter sunrise, until the stone is rolled away and hope emerges.

And, yet there is hope, there is always hope, we just have to look for it and not stay in the wilderness, not stand at the cross asking where has hope gone. Hope is here, in our hearts and all around. Even in the worst of times, resurrection appears in the sun that rises every morning and sets with its glorious beauty every evening. We know this for it is in our prayers and our dreams for a new day. We witness to the greatness of Easter in the prayers and sermons we still give, albeit online, and words of encouragement we offer in notes and phone calls. Yes, we are in a virus-induced wilderness that keeps us apart but we are held together in the One who prays through us. So, as we pray for things to get back to normal may we also pray for the courage to “change and grow in love” as the ancient Franciscan prayers remind us (Ilio Delia, 2004). Give thanks for this time of separation to pray more and find pleasure in little things,

*Pray when your heart yearns for more, not because someone tells you to,  
Pray for the grace, pray for the forgiveness,  
Pray for the guidance, pray for the world,  
And then, let the words go.  
Pray with your breath and listen,  
Pray with your heart not your head,  
Pray and sink into the moment,  
Pray and feel the presence of hope,  
Pray and rest in each breath that comes from you.  
There is nothing else,  
But you and the One who breathes in you,  
Praise God from whom all breath flows...*