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Welcome... *The Maximilian* is a monthly newsletter from the Education Commission to all categories of governors in our schools, highlighting changes in legislation and other news which will be of help to governing bodies.

Easter message: From the Director

It is unusual to be writing an Easter message in Holy Week. There is, however, nothing usual about this particular Holy Week. I have been both impressed and moved by the response of schools, head-teachers, staff and governors for the need to remain open for the disadvantaged and the children of key workers. Many of you are staying open over Good Friday and Easter Monday to support the Nation's efforts to defeat Corona Virus. Your willingness to work together and collaborate to form hubs and other workable arrangements has taken the pressure off hard-pressed local governments. This is Church at its best. "...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me..." (Mt 25:35-36)

The suffering many are experiencing in this Holy Week gives much pause for thought. Many now face their own lonely journey towards death. Others can only watch and pray that their loved ones come through the ordeal and are restored to health. Sadly, many have said goodbye to relatives and friends as ambulance doors close, never to see them alive again. Funerals are happening in isolation and grief is overcoming families. We know that this tragedy comes closer to our schools daily and are aware of the huge task ahead in terms of bereavement support.

Elsewhere I have paid tribute to the teachers in our schools who are on the frontline of the pandemic – and with no Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Of course healthcare professionals working at the sharp end of patient care are hugely at risk and fully deserving of the very best PPE the 21st Century has to offer. But our staff are also key workers, needing to come out of isolation and social distancing to provide uncomplaining and compassionate care. For many, this means leaving their own vulnerable relatives, especially those with household members in high risk categories. Your selfless contribution is amazing.

The Passion narratives provide a great model of service to the suffering in the brief introduction of Simon of Cyrene. The Stations of the Cross give us the example of Veronica who wiped the face of Jesus in his time of great suffering and need. Most of us will not spend Good Friday in such circumstances of acute care; holding those who are in our thoughts and prayers will be an important way to mark the day even if we can't join in our normal Good Friday liturgies.

As you will know by now, Corona Virus has severely limited the Education Commission's ability to deliver its work. Most of the team are furloughed. We met online on Tuesday and all are in good spirits. They wanted me to convey their good wishes to you all. Please see the practical implications section below for further information.

At the end of the Passion is the triumph of Easter. My hopes and prayers this week are that the joy of the Resurrection fills all of us and renews us for the long journey back to normality.

Happy Easter when you finally get to it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Smith' or similar, written in a cursive style.