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Dear Friends

It is not often that the media gives us only good news. Over the past few days we have enjoyed shining reports of the speed of the vaccination programme, only then to be concerned about a shortage of vaccines next month. This has been compounded by news of a growing third wave of the virus across parts of continental Europe, and all that could mean for us. One step forward, two steps backwards? And yet, we cannot deny that where the news has been good, it has been very good. We can be grateful that half the adult population of our country have now received their first jab. I mention this impressive fact because our tendency as humans is to dwell on the negative, on the bad news. To focus on the good news and remain with it is surely more helpful.

Remaining with the good news is what the Church is for. Certainly, the Church as the community of human beings who want to follow Jesus encompasses the whole of human life with all its ups and downs. But at the heart of its message is the certainty that the end of our story, whether as a community or as individuals, is a happy one. In fact perfect happiness, which we can hardly imagine this side of eternity, is the gift awaiting each one of us.

We are all prone to sadness, anxiety and negativity. These are regular visitors to the human heart. But Jesus, the light bearer and the joy bearer, makes his home with us and reassures us that these visitors are only temporary. Our journey through the forty days is hopefully building our confidence that we are ultimately safe and sound under the watchful eye of our Father God, and that our birthright is not slavery to bad news, darkness and anxiety, but a place specifically prepared for us in the light of eternity.

May God bless you and those you love.

**Father John**



**Our Lady of Compassion**

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