



James Goold House
P O Box 146
East Melbourne Vic 8002
Australia

PASTORAL LETTER FOR LENT 2011

ARCHBISHOP DENIS HART

'PILGRIMAGE TO CHRIST AND DISCOVERY OF WHO WE ARE'

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I invite you to join me in our annual Lenten pilgrimage to Jesus Christ from 9th March to 24th April when we will celebrate the resurrection of the Lord in whom we were baptised.

Lent is the springtime of our life in the Spirit; a special gift of God to us, his people. We imitate Jesus who fasted forty days in the desert to prepare himself for the great work of redeeming humanity. We undertake prayer, accompanied by penance and works of love, to deepen our faith and focus authentically on who we are and what is our personal mission in community and family.

THE WORD OF GOD

Pope Benedict invites us to reflect on the powerful Sunday Gospels of Lent, individually or together, so that we will remember the way God has led us (Deuteronomy 8:2). We see Jesus as teacher and healer as we examine our lives and take new steps as followers of Jesus.

BAPTISM AND INITIATION

In Lent the whole Church together with the catechumens prepares for baptism; they to enter the Church, we to recognise the full consequences of baptism and life in Christ with our renewal of baptism promises at Easter and the living of a new life.



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LENT AND THE CHURCH

Through prayer and discipline of our body by fasting and almsgiving we gradually recognise through this 'desert' how far we are from God and come to repent so as to remove ourselves from those things which are blocking the light of God into our lives. Repentance is an abrupt turn around and a discovery of the joyful reality when God speaks to our heart. Through the stillness of prayer we know that God is near. Lent is also a time of faithfulness to what the Church teaches about relationships, family life, good and evil. As the Church is faithful to what Christ taught and proclaims it to the world without adjusting it to modern convenience, so we take up an authentic existence renewing our commitment in baptism.

FOR THIS YEAR

1. Renew our commitment to prayer at home with the family and in an atmosphere of silence in our church in preparation for the prayerful celebration of Mass as the Church intends.
2. An effort to discipline ourselves through fasting, accompanied by prayer so God will allow us to see more clearly our need for forgiveness in the sacrament of penance. Then we are able to turn away from self through charity to others, e.g. Project Compassion, giving of our time and talent to fulfil the mission given us at baptism. We show the faith by word and example.

May this Lenten springtime of renewal be for each of us an opening flower of life as we prepare for Easter.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ *Dennis J. Hart*

ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE.