



Diocese of Port Pirie Chancery

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Pastoral Letter to the Christian Faithful of the Diocese of Port Pirie **The Season of Lent 2014**

Dear Sisters & Brothers

We commence Lent with Ashes and a reminder of our mortality – “Remember, you are but dust and unto dust you shall return”. We move through the Annual Retreat of the Church of God to contemplate what Sin has done, and how grace has abounded because God so loved us that He sent His only Son. We conclude with the Easter Light and the song of Alleluia.

During this Lent the Royal Commission will continue to put up a mirror to show the sinfulness of many Christians whose actions belied their baptism and vocation, and the neglect of victims. It will continue to be a time of the cross for all of us who love the Church. But remember that the word “Lent” originally came from the old Anglo-Saxon word “lencten”, the word for Spring, because in the Northern Hemisphere Easter occurs in Spring. So let our first Lenten prayer be for a Church renewed, re-vowed, re-committed, re-born in grace and goodness to fidelity to Jesus, who came that we might have life to the full, with no hypocrisy, an Easter Church.

Next, let us pray for the leadership of our Church, especially for the strengthening of the spirit of service and simplicity that Pope Francis is urging, that through this we might live better as followers of Jesus. Let us pray in this regard also for our own diocese and the Australian Church that we might be effective witnesses of love and joy and faith in our beautiful but increasingly secular Australia.

And let us pray for our youth who will carry the future of town and country and Church and nation.

For five minutes each day, let us read and ponder bits of Holy Scripture – making an effort to become really familiar with the Gospels. Let us exercise some penance - no meat or rich foods on Friday, as a symbol. Make an effort to reconcile with one person who offends us.

Then we shall all sing with such joy a hope-filled Easter Alleluia!

Yours in Christ

+ Gregory O’Kelly SJ
Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie

27th February 2014