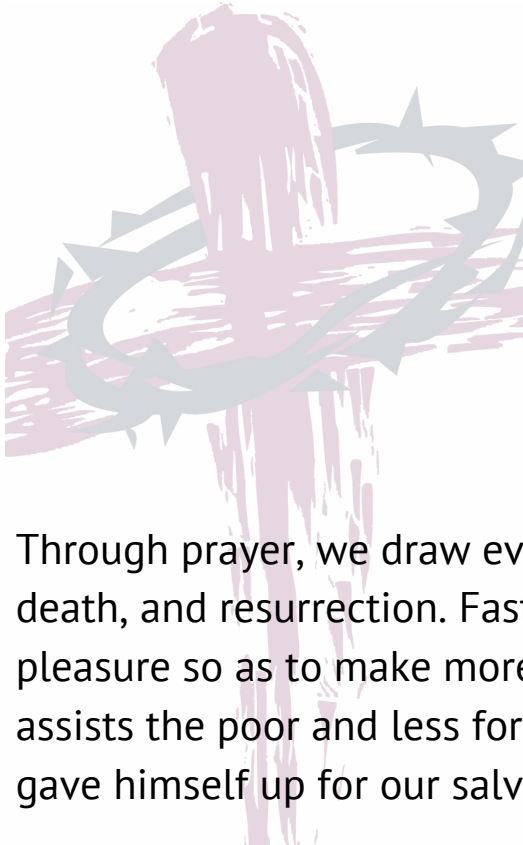


LENTEN MESSAGE FROM BISHOP GREGORY PARKES



MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD, LENT IS A TIME FOR US TO PREPARE OUR MINDS, HEARTS, AND SOULS TO CELEBRATE THE GREAT FEAST OF EASTER.

We do so through the traditional practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Each of these in a particular way help us in our preparation.

Through prayer, we draw ever closer to God and the mystery of his Son's life, death, and resurrection. Fasting is a means of denying ourselves some earthly pleasure so as to make more room in our lives for God. And almsgiving, which assists the poor and less fortunate, unites us with the self-gift of Jesus Christ, who gave himself up for our salvation.

The ashes that we receive on Ash Wednesday are a reminder that "we are dust, and unto dust we shall return." Therefore, the time to be reconciled with God and others through the Sacrament of Reconciliation is now.

Many of the faithful choose to "give something up" for Lent. Again, this is a small way that we can unite with and offer a sacrifice to God who made the ultimate sacrifice – his son Jesus Christ. We might also choose to make a special effort to do something virtuous during this season. For example, offering encouragement to others in need, making a special effort to be patient with those around us, or attending daily Mass or the Stations of the Cross.

May this Lenten season be an opportunity for each us to worthily prepare ourselves to celebrate the Easter Season.

May the Lord's abundant blessings be with you!

Sincerely Yours in Christ, Bishop Gregory Parkes

