



8 February 2018

Issue No: 169

From +John...

Dear Friends

This time next week we will be in Lent and Pope Francis has told us in his 2018 Lenten Message: ***“Lent summons us, and enables us, to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life.”*** He went on to say, ***“I would like again this year to help the entire Church experience this time of grace anew, with joy and in truth.”*** They are wonderful invitation to all of us, and for all those we minister to in our parishes, teach in our schools and colleges, and those we interact with in daily life. It’s an important and essential question to ask ourselves in prayer throughout this time of Lent – *‘What do I need to do to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly in every aspect of my life?’* and *‘What do I need to do to experience this time of grace anew?’*

It is also important to ask ourselves how we help others to do this. We probably all struggle ourselves to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and could do with an encouraging word or smile, a promise of prayerful support, or even an invitation to pray with someone else. Lent is an invitation to “think differently,” to think differently about how we pray, about how we either do or don’t do everything as a disciple of Jesus. Therefore, another helpful question is *‘In what ways can I think differently about my life to be renewed and live wholeheartedly for God?’*

Two days after Lent begins, Friday 16th February, is also the day for all Catholics throughout New Zealand to observe the Day of Prayer and Penance for Victims of Abuse and Violence in New Zealand. Last year the Bishops Conference was invited with other Bishops’ Conferences around the world to join in a day of prayer for the victims of abuse and violence (this was at the suggestion of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors). The New Zealand Bishops decided to hold this day at the beginning of Lent. We all know that many people are the victims of violence in our society, especially many young people. Sadly, we know too that young and vulnerable people have been victims of abuse at the hands of some Clergy. It is appropriate that we have a day to pray for ALL victims of violence and abuse and to acknowledge again the terrible impact of abuse by members of the Church, and all other violent and abusive acts in New Zealand. Please pray for them on Friday 16th February.

Suggestions for Prayer of the Faithful 16 February 2018

- That the cries of those who have been abused in body, mind and spirit, suffered in violent relationships and betrayed by the trust they placed in others, may call forth from us a passion for justice and reparation.

Let us pray to the Lord:

- That those who live and work with our abused and violated brothers, sisters and children may find tangible ways to affect renewed dignity, healing and forgiveness.

Let us pray to the Lord.

With every blessing for a prayerful and Spirit filled Lent.

+John

As the End of Life Bill starts the process of being debated in Parliament Please all invoke the intercession of Suzanne Aubert

PTO

Dear Friends,

At our Archdiocesan Synod last year one of the proposals was “The Archbishop with the Council of Priests supports the ministry of preaching in a planned and resourced way.” We will be working on that throughout the year ahead. Yesterday (7th February), at the General Audience, Pope Francis continued his catechesis on the Mass. He spoke of the Readings and the Homily. I have therefore extracted the part about the homily as he makes some very important points that are well worth all of us reflecting on.

With blessings

+John

“I have already addressed the argument of the homily in the Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, where I recalled that the liturgical context “calls for the preaching to orient the assembly, and also the preacher, to a communion with Christ in the Eucharist, which transforms life.”

One who gives the homily must fulfil well his ministry – he who preaches, the priest, or the deacon or the Bishop, offers a real service to all those taking part in the Mass, but those who hear him must also do their part. First of all, by paying due attention, namely, by assuming the right interior dispositions, without subjective demands, knowing that every preacher has merits and limitations. If sometimes there is reason to be bored by a long, or unfocused, or incomprehensible homily, at others times, in stead, it’s prejudice that is the obstacle. And one who gives a homily must be conscious that he’s not doing something of his own; he is preaching, giving voice to Jesus, he is preaching the Word of Jesus. And the homily must be well prepared; it must be brief, brief! A priest said to me that once he went to another city where his parents lived and his father said to him: “You know, I’m happy, because along with my friends we found a church where there is Mass without a homily!” And how often we see that during the homily some fall asleep, others chat or go outside to smoke a cigarette . . . Therefore, please, make the homily brief, but it must be well prepared. And how is a homily prepared, dear priests, deacons and Bishops? How is it prepared? With prayer, with the study of the Word of God and by doing a clear and brief synthesis; it must not go beyond ten minutes, please.”

Items of Interest

Ash Wednesday is next week, 14 February. There will be **NO** Valentine’s Day Mass celebrated this year.

As the new school year starts I wish all teachers, students and support staff well for the coming year. The **Commissioning Mass** for North Island Teachers is Tuesday 20 February at the Cathedral at 5.30pm. The South Island Commissioning Mass will be Friday 23 at St Mary’s Church, Manuka Street, Nelson. This is a wonderful opportunity for Clergy, Lay Pastoral Leaders and teaching staff to come together to show support and communion to each other

As the **busyness** of a new year gets underway do not forget to stop and be thankful for the many gifts and talents we have and for the many opportunities we are given every day.

I encourage all Clergy and Lay Pastoral Leaders to attend the **Ministry Formation Days** offered throughout the year. The dates for 2018 are:

Tuesday 6 March

Tuesday 22 May

Tuesday 03 July

Tuesday 18 September

Tuesday 27 November

Date Savers:

- Monday 26 March, South Island Chrism Mass (Nelson)
- Tuesday 27 March, North Island Chrism Mass (Cathedral)
- Tuesday 27 March, Clergy Prayer Day