

Archbishop's Jubilee Year Lenten Message

*Therefore, my beloved,
be steadfast, immovable,
always excelling in the work of the Lord,
because you know that in the Lord
your labour is not in vain.*

(1 Cor. 15:58)

Dear People of the Archdiocese of St. John's:

This coming week, with the celebration of Ash Wednesday, we begin the season of Lent. Lent is a special time for us, a time for recommitting ourselves to, "excelling in the work of the Lord". There is a great deal of work to be done.

In this Jubilee Year, Pope Francis invites us as "Pilgrims of Hope" to do what we can to "Turn Debt into Hope" for the billions of people in our world who often lack the essentials of life. We are invited to participate in this "work of the Lord" both by giving to this year's Share Lent campaign and by urging our country's decision-makers to prioritize people and planet by providing debt justice for communities crushed by unjust and unpayable debts.

Ecologically, we are challenged as individuals and as a nation to live a lifestyle that is environmentally respectful and sustainable.

Politically, we are called to recognize our right and obligation to be informed of the concerns and issues facing our province and country and to be involved respectfully and proactively in discerning and supporting the leaders and policies that promote justice and peace in our country and around the world.

Locally and globally, we are reminded that we are "our brother's keeper" and that we must be actively concerned and involved in assisting those brothers and sisters who are suffering because of warfare, persecution, oppression, poverty, homelessness, illness and/or abuse.

Traditionally we are invited in Lent to "excel in the works of the Lord" by our participation in the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer opens our mind to God's presence and guidance. Fasting invites us into a "poverty of spirit" that opens our hearts to the deeper needs of ourselves and others. Almsgiving provides us with the opportunity to share ourselves and our goods and talents in ways that are a blessing to both the giver and the receiver.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus tells the disciples that "each tree is known by its own fruit" and that "no good tree bears bad fruit". As we prepare to begin the Lent of this Jubilee Year, let us ask the Lord to inspire and guide us through prayer, fasting and almsgiving to excel in bearing good fruit, fruit that shows us to truly be "Pilgrims of Hope", who excel in doing the works of the Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Peter Hundt
Archbishop of St. John's