



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of *Mission and Spirituality News* for 2010. Next week we begin the season of Lent. I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to a 'slow' Lent, taking time to experience the richness of this journey and to do things a little differently. One of the central images of Lent is The Cross. We're asked to 'pick up our cross' and follow Christ and even to pick up our cross 'daily'. This is a demanding request. It made me think; am I really capable of this?

The Passion, in Luke's Gospel, describes the way Simon from Cyrene comes forth to help Jesus shoulder the burden of the Cross. Jesus says nothing but allows him to lighten the load. What's this saying to me?

My temptation is to pick up my cross and refuse to accept help. I'm even tempted to add to my own burden and believe that the more I suffer alone the greater the reward. My ego gets in the way. I can't follow Christ on my own. I want to slow down and graciously accept help from Simon. We 'pick up our crosses daily', and journey through Lent together.

A number of Diocesan Offices have produced excellent Lenten material for groups and individuals. Twelve Bishops from across Australia have contributed to a new electronic resource— **The Reflection**. They individually reflect on the Sunday Gospel readings for Lent and then we are asked to consider our response. It can be used by a group, a family or by individuals. To access all the information you need go to <http://thereflection.vividas.com> Bishop David Walker has produced his *Lectio Divina* Lenten booklet. It is a great for individuals, parish groups, senior students, parents, teachers and those working in hospitals and Catholic Aged Care facilities. To order a free copy go to <http://www.dbb.org.au/ourworks/Pages/LectioDivina.aspx>

Brisbane Diocese has developed 7 resources, titled *Remember Me*, for Lenten groups. You can order these at http://bne.catholic.net.au/faithlife/fl.php/store/lent-pentecost_adults_1055 Wollongong Resources can be ordered from <http://www.dow.org.au/online-shop/born-for-this> The Diocese of Canberra -Goulburn have an ecumenical Lenten Program <http://www.catholiclife.org.au/index.php?view=Article/View&id=121>

In 2010 we have some new initiatives. Each month we'll feature Brendan Byrne's sj St Paul Resource Kit. It's superb and ideal for Parish faith formation groups, for senior students studying St Paul and for RE teacher's own professional development. There is also an excellent Religious Education resources for teachers of secondary school students. This month there is a complete Senior Lenten Retreat program.

Finally I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly express my deep gratitude to Dr Matthew Del Nevo for his contribution to *Mission and Spirituality News* over the past two years. His articles have always been original, though provoking and challenging. Thank you.

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