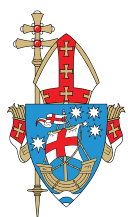


A PASTORAL LETTER FOR LENT 2025

PILGRIMS OF HOPE:

A Lenten Journey in Light of the Synod and Jubilee Year



Catholic
Archdiocese
of Adelaide



To God's Holy People in the Archdiocese of Adelaide.



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we embark upon the sacred season of Lent in this Jubilee Year of 2025, our hearts are drawn to the call of the Lord to renew our faith, deepen our communion, and walk as pilgrims of hope. This holy season invites us to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, guiding us towards a transformation that echoes the spirit of the Synod on Synodality (2023-2024). The synodal journey has been a time of listening, discernment, and unity in the Holy Spirit, preparing us to embrace the Jubilee theme: *Pilgrims of Hope*.

Lent, a season of conversion and grace, is the path upon which we are invited to journey more deeply into the mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. As the Church continues its synodal process, we are reminded that we are a people walking together, discerning the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and responding to the call of mission in our time.

We also renew our commitment to Christ, deepening our awareness of His love and mercy, and accompanying one another toward Easter's radiant joy.

1. Lent: A Call to Life and Renewal

Lent is always a time of conversion and grace, however in this Jubilee year, it takes on a special significance. We are invited to live Lent not merely as a season of penance, but as a journey of profound renewal, and ultimately a journey to Easter.

The Synod has encouraged us to rediscover our identity as a Church that listens and walks together, fostering communion and participation. This means that our Lenten practices must not be individualistic but communal, embracing the needs of our sisters and brothers, especially the poor, the marginalised, and those preparing for the sacraments of initiation.

A poignant story which I heard at the Synod comes to mind. In a small parish in Africa, a group of catechumens—men and women preparing for baptism—gather each week, sharing their testimonies of how Christ has transformed their lives. One young woman, Maria by name, fled war and found refuge in the Church. Through the love and accompaniment of the Christian community, she encountered Jesus and now awaits the Easter Vigil with hope in her heart. Her journey mirrors that of the early Christians, and those from our own Archdiocese, and reminds us that Lent is about walking together toward the light of Christ.



2. A Call to Synodality: Walking Together in Lent

The Synod on Synodality has opened our hearts to the reality that the Church is not an institution distant from its people but a communion of believers journeying together. This Lent, let us consider what it means to walk together in faith. Just as Jesus journeyed through the desert for forty days, facing trials and temptations, we too are called to reflect on the challenges we encounter and to support one another in our Lenten disciplines.

Synodality invites us to listen deeply—to God, to the Church, and to one another. It is a journey of encounter, dialogue, and accompaniment. During this season, let us make space for moments of prayerful silence, for engaging with Scripture, and for listening to the voices of those who feel unheard. As we practice fasting and almsgiving, let us extend our hands to the marginalised, the poor, and the suffering, recognising Christ in them.

3. Lent: A Season of Conversion and Renewal

Conversion is at the heart of Lent. The prophet Joel reminds us, “*Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning*” (Joel 2:12). In this Jubilee Year, the call to conversion is intensified, for it is a time of grace and renewal, a moment to embrace God’s mercy and to walk more faithfully in His light.

This season challenges us to turn away from sin and selfishness, embracing, or turning toward a life of holiness and self-giving love. Pope Francis reminds us that true conversion is not just personal but communal—it calls us to foster relationships of justice, peace, and reconciliation. As we reflect on the fruits of the Synod, let us examine how we live as Church—are we inclusive, welcoming, and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit? Do we serve one another with humility and love?

Through acts of penance, we align ourselves more closely with the suffering Christ. Fasting helps us detach from worldly excess, prayer deepens our relationship with God, and almsgiving opens our hearts to the needs of our sisters and brothers. In these ways, we prepare for the joy of Easter, when Christ makes all things new.

4. The Catechumens: A Living Sign of Hope

Each year, the Church prepares new members to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. These catechumens, like the woman at the well in the Gospel of John (Jn 4:5-42), thirst for the living water that only Christ can give. Their presence among us is a gift, reminding us of our own baptismal call and urging us to renew our faith with sincerity.

This Lent, I encourage every parish community to journey closely with those preparing for baptism. Let us embrace them with love, encourage them with prayer, and share our own stories of faith. Their witness strengthens us all, rekindling our first love for Christ and His Church.



5. Pilgrims of Hope: Living the Jubilee Spirit

The Jubilee Year is a special time of grace, a reminder that we are pilgrims on a journey towards the fullness of God's kingdom. *Pilgrims of Hope*—this powerful theme resonates with the Lenten invitation to trust in the Lord's providence, even in the face of trials and uncertainties.

To be a pilgrim is to embrace the journey, knowing that God walks with us. Hope is our guide. It is not a passive wish but an active trust in God's faithfulness. As the Church continues its synodal path, hope compels us to look forward, to be builders of a world renewed in Christ's love.

This Lent, let us be intentional in cultivating hope—through prayer, through acts of reconciliation, through commitment to justice and peace. Let us witness to the hope that the risen Christ brings, in our families, communities, and the world. Our acts of kindness, our willingness to forgive, and our courage to stand for truth and goodness are ways we live as pilgrims of hope.

As pilgrims of hope on this Lenten journey, we fast from distractions, from indifference, and from self-centredness, and make space for hope to grow in our hearts. Hope is not passive—it is a movement toward the Lord, just as the prodigal son, having come to his senses, set out toward his father's house (Lk 15:11-32).

Hope is also found in unexpected places. Again I recall a story from the Synod, where a parish priest in a European city opened his doors to refugees and homeless individuals. One Lenten evening, he knelt to wash the feet of a man who had lost everything. In that simple act, the priest rediscovered the essence of the Gospel: the Lord is near to the brokenhearted (Ps 34:18). We, too, are called to be bearers of such hope, especially in this Jubilee year.



6. Synodality and Lenten Conversion

The Synod on Synodality has reminded us that the Church is not a static institution but a dynamic community on a journey. Lent is the perfect time to live out this synodal spirit by fostering deep listening, dialogue, and renewal in our communities.

- **Listening:** How often do we truly listen to those around us, especially those who feel alienated from the Church? This Lent, let us practice the discipline of attentive listening—to God in prayer, to Scripture, and to the cries of those in need.
- **Walking Together:** Let us seek ways to strengthen our bonds with fellow parishioners, families, and even those outside the Church, inviting them into the life of Christ.
- **Discerning and Acting in Love:** Conversion is not just about avoiding sin but about choosing the good with greater intentionality. Our acts of charity, justice, and reconciliation should be visible signs of our faith in action.

7. A Journey Towards Easter Joy

Lent does not end in sorrow but in the triumph of Easter. The cross leads to resurrection. The sacrifices we make, the penances we undertake, the prayers we offer—all these prepare our hearts to celebrate the victory of Christ over sin and death.

As we journey through these forty days, may we keep our eyes fixed on the light of Christ. Let us embrace the lessons of the Synod—deepening our communion, increasing our participation, and committing more fully to the mission of the Church. Let our Lenten journey be one of renewal, leading us to Easter joy with hearts purified and spirits uplifted.



8. Lifting Up Our Hearts: Preparing for Easter Joy

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, may this Lent be a sacred time of grace for you and your families. May the Holy Spirit guide you in deepening your faith, in walking together as one Church, and in living as pilgrims of hope. As we journey towards Easter, may we be transformed by the love of Christ, ready to embrace the mission He entrusts to us.

As we walk these forty days, let us do so with hearts lifted toward the promise of Easter. The Resurrection is the ultimate sign of hope, reminding us that God is always bringing life out of death, renewal out of despair. In the Easter Vigil, we will welcome new members into the Church, celebrating their baptism, confirmation, and first Eucharist. Let us surround them with our prayers and encouragement, witnessing to them that they are part of a Church that journeys together.

I invite each of you to embrace this Lent with renewed fervour: to pray deeply, to fast with purpose, and to give generously. Accompany one another in faith, support the catechumens with love, and become true pilgrims of hope. The world needs this witness now more than ever.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother and Model of faith, intercede for us on this sacred journey. May we, like her, ponder the mysteries of Christ in our hearts and walk with unwavering trust toward the light of His resurrection.

May this Lent be a time of deep renewal for you. May we walk together as Pilgrims of Hope, listening, accompanying, and preparing our hearts for the joy of Easter.

With every blessing for a fruitful and holy Lent and a hope filled journey to Easter,

In Domino

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Pat O'Regan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

+Pat O'Regan

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