



start  
afresh

from

Christ



We sometimes make an incredible mess of our lives.  
Wouldn't it be good to be able to

reboot

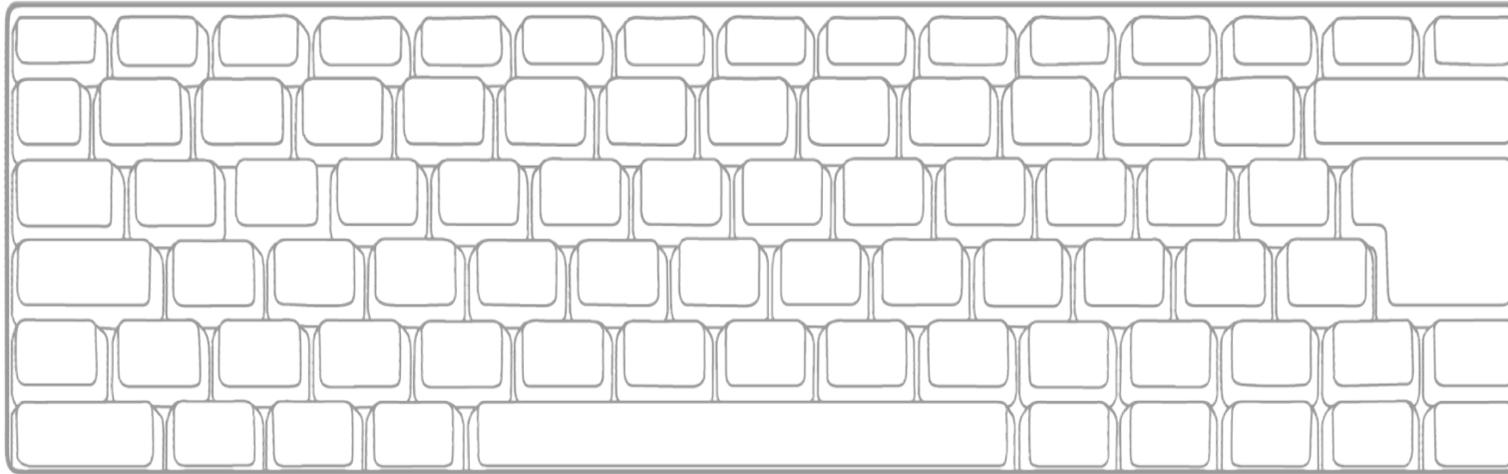
– to erase all our mistakes – and to have the opportunity of a

fresh  
start?

On the computer, making a new start can be as easy as pressing the 'restart' button. In our lives, it isn't always so easy. Especially when we hurt those we love, or do something that seems to us to threaten our future happiness, we need the help of an expert who will stand with us and walk us through the steps to start again.

Jesus is the one who helps you "start afresh". He loves you personally and uniquely. He gives you the grace – the free gift and the creative power – to make a new start. For you, he is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (*John 14:6*). He will show you the path through dark times, teach you the Truth about yourself and your place in the world, and help you fulfill the unique life God has planned for you.

At the start of this new Millennium, Blessed Pope John Paul II gave advice about how to begin afresh from Jesus. He wrote: "We shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: *I am with you!* (*Matthew 28:20*)."  
(*Novo Millennio Ineunte*)



### STARTING AFRESH WITH GRACE

Here then is the Good News: you are not on your own. Jesus is with you every step of the way. Blessed Pope John Paul II wrote: “There is a temptation which always besets every spiritual journey...: that of thinking that the results depend on our ability to act and to plan. ... it is fatal to forget that “without Christ we can do nothing” (cf. *John* 15:5).”

Jesus was born for you. Jesus died for you. Jesus lives for you. Do not despair over your past. Jesus told St Paul that “My power is made perfect in weakness” (*2 Corinthians* 12:9). This is what the Church means by “grace”. It doesn’t all depend on you! **As you make a new start in Jesus, remind yourself that “it is all grace”.**



### STARTING AFRESH WITH BAPTISM

Jesus said: “You must be born again” (*John* 3:7). When you were baptised, you were “reborn” in him. St Paul taught us: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (*2 Corinthians* 5:17).

Your baptism is a present reality. Because you are reborn in Jesus, your past mistakes have no power over you. Each day is a new day for you, an Easter Day, as you rise afresh from the tomb with Jesus. Each day is a new Pentecost, a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in which God gives you the strength to step out in hope. **As you start afresh from Jesus, live each day as God’s “new creation”!**



### STARTING AFRESH WITH PRAYER

When you need to start afresh in a human relationship, conversation and communication are needed. So too in your new life with God, prayer is the key, because prayer is conversation with God.

To develop a personal relationship with God in Jesus, you need to learn to pray. “Lord, teach us to pray!”, the disciples asked Jesus (*Luke* 11:1). So Jesus taught them to say: “Our Father who art in heaven”. Start with this prayer, and the other prayers you learned as children: Hail Mary, Glory be, Lord have mercy. From there you can progress to deeper prayer.

When you start to speak to God, God will speak to you. Conversation will grow, and your whole life will be filled with prayer. Give thanks to God, praise God, adore God, until you truly fall in love with God. **At every moment of the day, turn afresh to God in prayer.**



### STARTING AFRESH WITH SUNDAY

“Do not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another” (*Hebrews 10:25*). The Sunday Eucharist is the place where we start each new week with Jesus.

Attending the Sunday Eucharist, wrote Blessed Pope John Paul II, “is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life.”

Pope Benedict has said “We cannot live without Sunday.” Just as breakfast gives you the nourishment you need for each new day, so your hunger for a new start is satisfied in the sacred meal in which Jesus gives you his body and blood. Jesus invites you every Sunday to his table. **The “true Bread from heaven” will nourish you for a new start.**

“Whoever accepts the Lord into his life and loves him with all his heart is capable of a **new start.** He is able to fulfill the will of God, realizing **a new form of existence** driven by love and destined to eternity.”

(POPE BENEDICT XVI)



### STARTING AFRESH WITH RECONCILIATION

But what if things have gone really wrong? When we willfully and knowingly act in a way that violates God’s plan for our lives, Jesus meets us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to give us a new start. By confessing your sins to God’s priest with true sorrow, receiving absolution, and fulfilling your assigned penances, Jesus renews you in the grace of your Baptism and prepares you to receive him in Holy Communion.

Do not be afraid or ashamed to approach Jesus in this sacrament. In the Sacrament of Confession, God meets you face to face in Jesus. He shows us the compassionate heart of God and reconciles us fully with God. **As often as we fall, Jesus helps us back up to make a fresh start.**



### STARTING AFRESH WITH THE GOSPEL

Do you own a bible? Do you read it? The bible is a book written and put together by humans, but guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For thousands of years, people have found inspiration in the bible to help them make a new start in their lives.

You can make a new start by reading the Gospels. The Gospels are not history books – they are the place where you will meet Jesus face to face, just like the first disciples. The Gospels tell us that Jesus met his disciples where they were – at the fishing boats, at the tax collecting table – and said “Follow me”. **As you read the Gospels, Jesus will meet you where you are and call you to start afresh with him.**

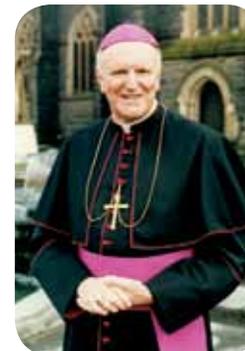


### STARTING AFRESH WITH A MISSION

Blessed Pope John Paul II called us to engage in a “new evangelisation” – a new proclamation of the Gospel in lands (like our own) where the Gospel was once proclaimed, but has now been forgotten by many. If you have made a fresh start with Jesus, are you prepared to show others the way to make this same fresh start in their lives?

The Good News is for sharing. Witness to God’s work in your life; show love by serving others; be a person of prayer and actively participate in the liturgy; talk about your faith with your friends and family. **In all you do, help others to make a fresh start in Jesus.**

Jesus has the power to change lives. His grace gives us hope. Like the disciples at the first Pentecost, join me and the whole Church in Australia as we commit ourselves in this Year of Grace to “start afresh from Christ”.



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