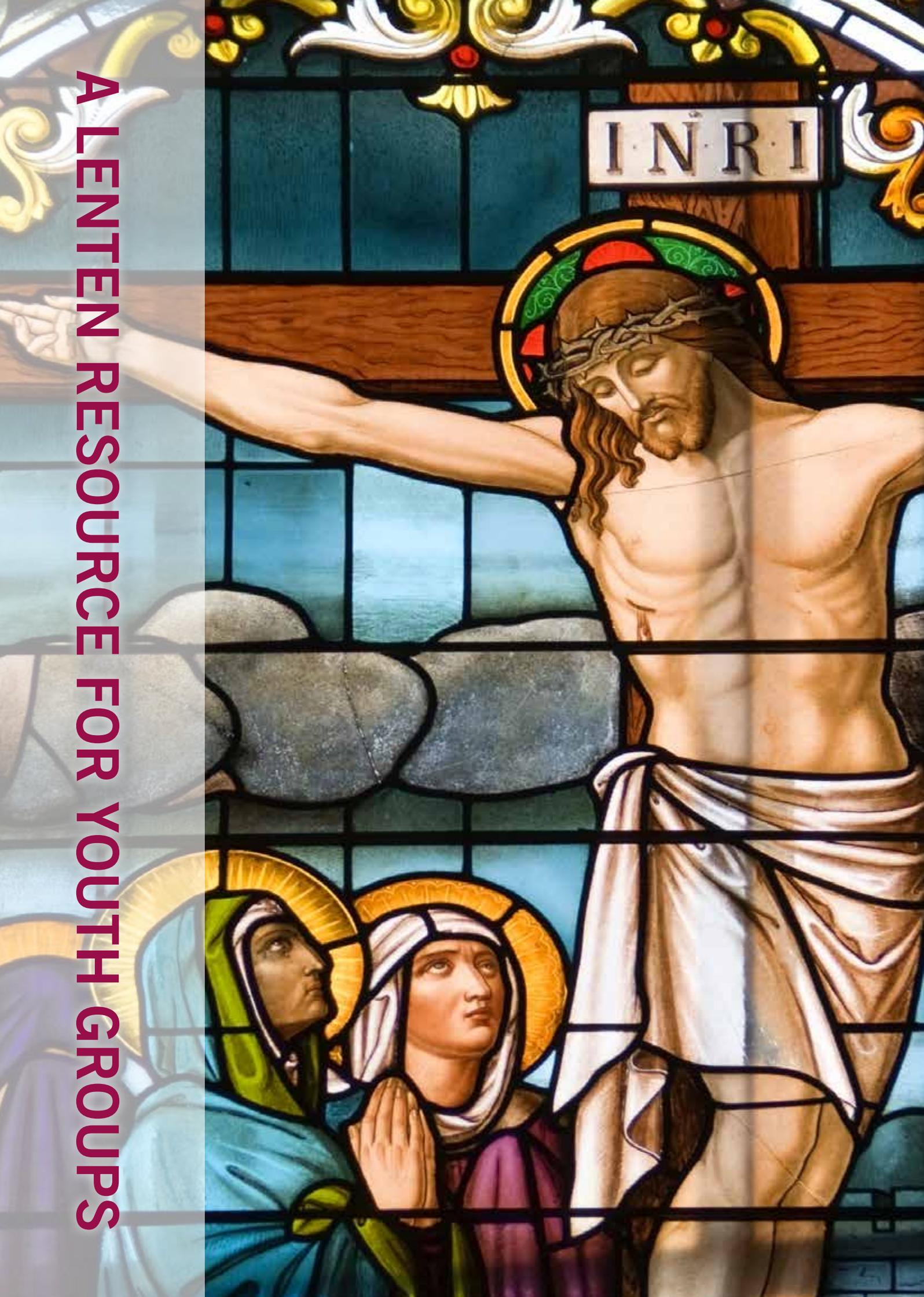


**A LENTEN RESOURCE FOR YOUTH GROUPS**





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# Introduction

As we approach this time of Lent we are all called to review how we are going in our faith. Am I living the life I am called to? Are there things I need to change? What is the Lord trying to say to me this year? For young people too, Lent can be a time of renewal or awakening in their spiritual life. In your youth group you may have young people who have been exposed to the Church's teachings about Lent for many years. Alternately, you may have those who have never heard of these practices, or never understood why we do what we do. By spending some time looking at Lent and the practices of our Church we can assist these young people to grow in their faith and come closer to the Lord.

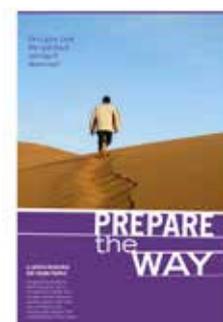
# How to use this resource

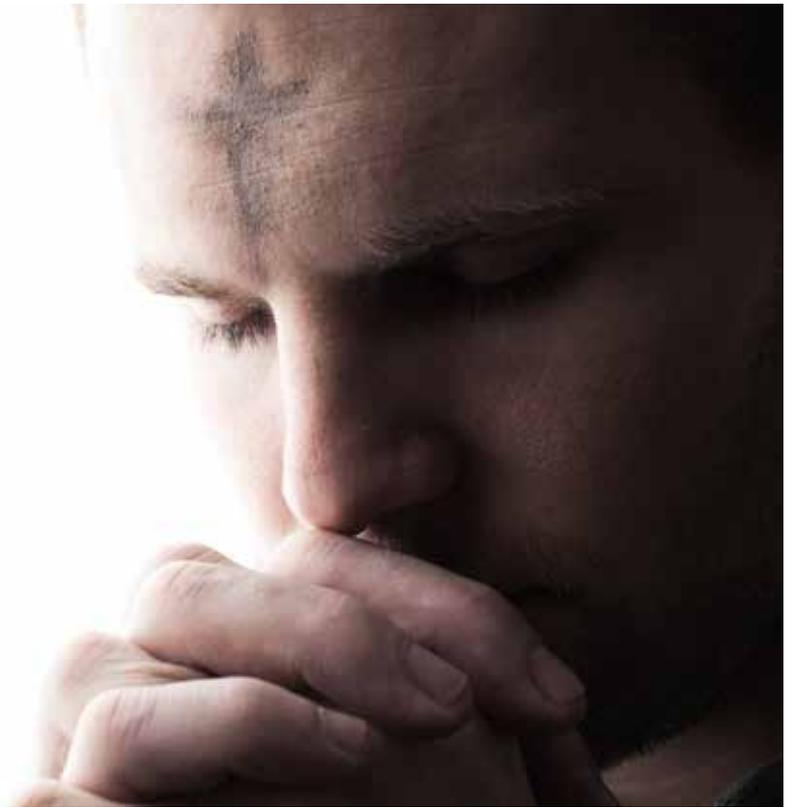
This resource is written by the Archdiocesan Office for Youth (AOY) in Melbourne as a program that youth groups can use throughout the season of Lent. The program aims to deepen the faith of young people and to extend their understanding of Lent. The resource includes four sessions that can be used in any order, however it is suggested that the Introduction to Lent session be used earlier on in Lent or the week before Lent starts. There are no set 'rules' to this program – you don't have to use all sessions and there are no allocated times for each activity. You are welcome to adapt this to suit the needs of your particular youth group. Additional resources are included at the end to help you locate further materials you may find useful.

The four sessions are:

- Introduction to Lent
- All about almsgiving
- The Stations of the Cross
- The reading of the Passion

In 2011 the AOY released a Lenten Resource for year A (which is the same as this year) called *Prepare the Way: Lenten Resource*. This contains six sessions that are based around the Gospels for each of the Sundays of Lent. This resource can still be downloaded from the AOY website and contains other ideas that you may like to use with your group. To access Prepare the Way: Lenten Resource click or type in: [www.cam.org.au/youth/Resources/Online-Resources](http://www.cam.org.au/youth/Resources/Online-Resources). It is located under the tab "Seasonal Resources" down the bottom.





## Session one *Introduction to Lent*

### **Overview:**

This session aims to introduce the season of Lent and teach/remind the youth about some of the key Lenten practices and the reasons for these. It is also hoped that each young person will make some sort of commitment for this Lent.

### **What you need:**

- Paper and pens (for the quiz)
- A copy of the quiz you choose
- Whiteboard/butchers paper and coloured markers
- Coloured paper (for the Lenten commitments)
- Tea light candles (for prayer at the end)
- Music (for prayer at the end)

### **ACTIVITY ONE: LENTEN QUIZZES**

Choose one of these two Lenten quizzes to introduce the topic. See the Appendix for the full text of each game.

#### **Option one: “Ten questions about Lent”**

Hand out paper and pens to each young person and read out this short quiz.

#### **Option two: “Heads or Tails”**

Invite your group to stand up and explain that you will be saying a number of phrases about Lent – some of which are true and some of which are false! They need to choose which answer they think is TRUE. If they think answer A is true, they put their hands on their heads. If they think answer B is true, they put their hands on their tails (bottom). For “true or false” questions, heads is true and tails is false. After each statement is read out, the answer is given. All those who got it wrong have to sit down. Those who answered correctly can proceed to the next question. The game finishes when there is only one person left or you have run out of questions!



## ACTIVITY TWO: GROUP DISCUSSION ABOUT LENTEN BASICS

Introduce this next session as a chance to go through some of the answers to the quiz in more detail. You can use these questions as a way to explain Lent with the help of the youth in your group. For each question, ask the group and discuss their answers. Always be affirming of the people who respond and if some answers are a little off track, try to steer the conversation back to the truth, whilst being respectful. Below are some key points that you may like to bring up if they are not mentioned by the group:

### What is the purpose of Lent?

- To remember Christ's death and resurrection
- To prepare us for the celebration of Easter
- To help us go back to the basics of our faith and recommit to our growth in holiness
- Lent is about conversion, turning our lives more completely over to Christ and his way of life.

### The Church calls us to recommit to prayer, fasting and almsgiving during Lent. What is prayer?

- Spending time with God
- Talking to God
- Listening to what he has to say to us
- There are some formal prayers of the church (Our Father, Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours)

### What is fasting?

- The Church asks all faithful over the age of 14 to fast on specific days. For those who are old, sick, or pregnant, they may need to choose a different sacrifice instead of fasting.
- The two compulsory days of fasting are **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday**.
- We are called to only have one proper meal on these days (though you can have up to two smaller meals or snacks in addition to the main meal)
- We abstain from eating meat (that means we don't eat meat)
- Catholics are called to do an act of penance every Friday of the year (e.g. not eating meat, saying extra prayer etc.).
- Remember, Lent is not an excuse for a diet!

### What is almsgiving?

- Giving to the poor/ those in need
- Giving materially or financially
- *Project Compassion* is one way our Church encourages people to "give alms".



### ACTIVITY THREE: GOSPEL READING

Introduce the Gospel reading which will now be read. You may like to invite someone from the group to read the Gospel.

#### Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

*Be careful not to parade your uprightness in public to attract attention; otherwise you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win human admiration. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. 'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.*

*When you are fasting, do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they go about looking unsightly to let people know they are fasting. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put scent on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.*

Finish with a short time of silence for people to think about what God is trying to say to them through this passage.

### ACTIVITY FOUR: "WHAT CAN WE COMMIT TO THIS YEAR FOR LENT"

Ask your groups to brainstorm all the different things you could do for Lent to help you grow in holiness. They could come under the headings:

- Things I want to do more of
- Things I want to do less of

Write each suggestion up on a whiteboard or butchers paper. Once you have written up your list, go through each suggestion and underline them in different colours to categorise them into: things to do for God (prayer, faith development, fasting), and things to do for others (acts of charity etc.). Here are some examples – you may like to mention a few of these but allow your group to come up with their own first!

- Things I could do **more** of:
  - Commit to spending some time in prayer each day (e.g. even 5 mins)
  - Read the readings for Mass each day or even just on Sundays
  - Visit someone who is lonely
  - Make a commitment to really focus on the homily at Mass
  - Read a spiritual book – e.g. about the life of a Saint or something else that will help you grow in your faith (e.g. set aside 15 mins before bed to do this each night)
  - Put a cross up in your bedroom
  - Volunteer to do a job around the house (without having to be asked)
  - Place a *Project Compassion* box somewhere visible in your house and make regular donations
  - Pray the Stations of the Cross (each day or once a week)
  - Pray the Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary (each day or once a week)
  - Go to confession more regularly (e.g. once a fortnight)
  - Try to go to a daily Mass (e.g. one extra time during the week)
  - Join in with some social service in your area
  - Help with the parish's preparations for Easter (e.g. music for the liturgies)
  - Join a parish Lenten prayer group
  - Sit next to someone at school who often gets left out
  - Write in a prayer journal each day
  
- Things I could do **less** of:
  - Sin and things that lead me to sin (e.g. gossiping, complaining, talking about yourself too much etc.)
  - Eating dessert/lollies/chocolates etc.
  - Eating a food you love (a classic – try to make it something you would eat every day)
  - Eating Easter eggs and hot cross buns (before Easter Sunday)
  - Watching TV (give it up entirely or perhaps do less than you would normally do)
  - Video/computer games
  - Facebook
  - Listening to music

Hand out a piece of small coloured paper to each young person and have them choose some commitments for Lent. You may like to encourage people to do at least one thing from each category (God and others). Play some quiet music as they write down their commitments on the paper. Explain that these Lenten commitments are to be kept private and not shared as they are commitments to God (as explained by Jesus in the Gospel above).

Encourage them to think about where they will place their commitment reminder - somewhere they will see it (e.g. in their wallet, on their dressing table, tape it to their mirror, put it in the toilet, put it next to their bed etc).

#### **ACTIVITY FIVE: CLOSING PRAYER**

Finish the session by inviting everyone to pray for each other that they may be faithful to their commitments and that they may grow in holiness during this Lenten period. You may like to play some quiet music at this time. You could invite each young person to come up and light a candle as a sign of their new commitment for Lent.

Song suggestions:

- *40 days* Matt Maher
- *Open my Eyes* Jesse Manibuson
- *Take Lord, Receive* John Foley
- *I give you my heart* Reuben Morgan
- *Refiners Fire (Lord I give you my Heart)* Brian Doerksen
- Instrumental music



## Session two *All about almsgiving*

### **Overview:**

This session goes into more detail about the practice of almsgiving and explores some of the work that has been done by Caritas, the agency that runs *Project Compassion*.

### **What you need:**

- Computer, data projector, screen and speakers
- *Project Compassion* boxes
- The questions for personal reflection
- A printed copy of the Caritas “What your dollars can do” poster

### **INTRODUCTION FOR THE SESSION:**

As we have heard, Lent is a time where we are called to “prayer, fasting and almsgiving”. But what is almsgiving?

Almsgiving is the practice of giving money and resources to people who have less. There are two main reasons why we are encouraged to give alms. The obvious reason is to ensure we are looking after the poor in our world – so they are healthy and happy. The second reason is to help ourselves grow. By giving away what we have, we become less attached to the material world. We are encouraged to give, not from our excess, but as the widow gave in the Gospel.

### **Read this except from the Gospel of Mark (12:41-44).**

*“He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, ‘In truth I tell you, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.’”*

For many young people who do not yet have a job, it can be difficult to know how they can “give alms”. We are encouraged by Jesus in this Gospel that even those of us who have a small amount of income can make a contribution. If you receive pocket money for jobs around the house, perhaps you can think about setting aside a percentage to give to the poor. This will help to form a habit for later in life.

This giving also helps us to remember that it is on God that we rely. We should not put our faith in money and material things but in God who loves us and will look after all our needs.

### **ACTIVITY ONE: PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Summarise the information in the introduction. You may like to ask a young person to read the Gospel.

### **ACTIVITY TWO: PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Invite the young people to have a think about the following questions. You may like to display the questions on a PowerPoint or give them a copy of the questions so they can read over them. This is not a time of sharing with each other but more a quiet time. You may like to play some quiet music for a few minutes.

- What do I spend my money on? Do I buy things that I don't really need?
- Do I regularly give to charity?
- Do I assist with initiatives that aim to raise money for people who are less fortunate than me? (e.g. by helping to organise fundraising efforts)
- What can I do this Lent to increase my generosity to those in material need?

### **ACTIVITY THREE: LOOKING AFTER THE POOR IN OUR WORLD**

Caritas is the Church's agency established for international aid and development. Each Lent we are encouraged to take part in the *Project Compassion*, by putting donations in the special cardboard box. This might be a small amount each day or week that we have set aside, or it may be the money that we would normally spend on something we don't need. We then bring the box to Mass at the end of Lent and donate our money. Have you ever wondered where this money ends up? Caritas has developed a set of videos to show some of the work that has been achieved with the money donated from *Project Compassion*.

Visit the Caritas website and check out the introductory video for *Project Compassion 2014* (3:20mins). There are another seven videos (3-4mins long) which follow the lives and stories of different people around the world who have been impacted by the good work of Caritas. Watch the introductory video with your group and then choose another video to show them. (You may like to watch one video in each week of Lent or perhaps give homework to your group to watch them at home!)

[www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/videos/pc14-introduction-video](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/videos/pc14-introduction-video)

[www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/videos](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/videos)

Information and videos about other Caritas works are also available on this website!

### **ACTIVITY FOUR: GROUP DISCUSSION**

Ask the following two questions to the whole group:

- What response do you have to the videos you have just seen?
- Does your group want to make a certain commitment to raise money together for *Project Compassion*?
- Read through the various descriptions of what donations of certain amounts can be used for ([www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/what-your-dollars-can-do](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/what-your-dollars-can-do)). (Poster available to print: [www.caritas.org.au/docs/pc-2014/What-your-dollars-can-do-poster](http://www.caritas.org.au/docs/pc-2014/What-your-dollars-can-do-poster)).

### **ACTIVITY FIVE: PRAYER**

To finish the session invite young people in your group to offer spontaneous prayers. Finish the prayer time by having someone lead this prayer, based on a prayer written by St Ignatius:

*Teach me, Lord Jesus, to be generous: to give, not counting the cost; to toil, not asking for rest; to labour, not seeking any reward. We pray that, this Lent, we may discover the heart of Jesus and be drawn to "make our home in him" more fully. Amen*



## Session three *Praying the Stations of the Cross with young people*

### **Overview:**

In Lent, we are especially reminded of the story of Christ's death on the Cross. One of the practices which the Church encourages us to do is pray the Stations of the Cross. This is also known as the Way of the Cross. There are many ways in which youth groups can meditate on the Way of the Cross.

### **What you need:**

This will depend on which activity you choose to do.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the early Christian tradition, pilgrims visiting Jerusalem would often visit the places where Jesus walked and lived. They also spent time visiting and praying along the road where He journeyed to His crucifixion. Over hundreds of years this tradition has developed and we now have a set of stations that we can meditate on and pray with – even when we are not in Jerusalem! The Stations help us to contemplate the suffering that Jesus experienced and to remember why – His love for us. As we think about Jesus' suffering on the Cross we are also able to unite our own suffering with His. We know that whatever difficulties we are facing, Jesus is there to walk beside us. He suffers with us, we are not alone.

The 14 traditional stations are:

1. Jesus is condemned to die
2. Jesus is made to bear His cross
3. Jesus falls the first time
4. Jesus meets His mother
5. Simon helps Jesus carry His cross
6. Veronica wipes Jesus' face
7. Jesus falls the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls the third time
10. Jesus is stripped
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross
12. Jesus dies on the cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Pope John Paul II developed 14 Stations that were more closely based on the Scriptures. These can also be used:

1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
2. Jesus betrayed by Judas
3. Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin
4. Jesus denied by Peter
5. Jesus condemned by the people
6. Jesus crowned with thorns and clothed in purple
7. Jesus carries the cross
8. Jesus assisted by Simon of Cyrene
9. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
10. Jesus is crucified
11. Jesus speaks to the thief
12. Jesus speaks to his mother
13. Jesus dies on the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

#### **Elements that are usually involved in the Stations:**

- Movement: Part of this prayer involves a pilgrimage. As we contemplate the steps that Jesus walked, we are encouraged to literally move to a different place. Even if you are simply reading the Stations quietly, we walk, or change posture (kneeling/standing/sitting) in between each one.
- The leader announces the station e.g. “The first station: Jesus is condemned to death.”
- The leader says a statement of praise – the most common being “We adore You O Christ and we bless You”
- The people respond with a statement of faith e.g. “Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.” Everyone usually genuflects on one knee as this line is prayed.
- Sometimes a piece of scripture relating to the station will be read out.
- Sometimes the leader will read a reflection about the station and how it relates to us. This may include a prayer that everyone can say together.
- In between each station, it is traditional to pray the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.
- Sometimes another song is also sung as people move to the next place.

#### **ACTIVITY ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Begin the session by summarising the above information in as much detail as necessary.

#### **ACTIVITY TWO: PRAYING THE STATIONS:**

Choose one of the below suggestions to pray the Stations of the Cross. Consider buying a little booklet of the Stations or printing the AOY Stations of the Cross resource ([www.cam.org.au/youth/resources](http://www.cam.org.au/youth/resources)) for each member of your group to use during the session and take home with them. Ask different young people to read out the reflections for each station. You may like to incorporate some silence into each station (before or after a meditation).

##### **1. Dramatising the stations**

Drama can be a powerful tool in leading young people to prayer as it is very visual and helps them imagine the scene in real life. The Young Christian Students put together a Stations of the Cross manual which was published in the lead up to WYD 2008. This includes youth related reflections and prayers and also includes directions for dramatisation. You can download a copy of their manual from here: [www.ycw.org.au/Links/Way\\_of\\_the\\_cross.pdf](http://www.ycw.org.au/Links/Way_of_the_cross.pdf) .

You may also like to search for another version, create your own, or have the youth make up their own account.

- Consider whether you would like the whole group to be involved in dramatising or just a few. If you have a group of leaders, perhaps they could dramatised the scenes for the group.
- You may like to divide your group into teams and have them do alternate stations. This will allow everyone a chance to watch the drama as well as be involved.
- When using drama, there is the risk that people will become easily distracted and start laughing. Consider how you will keep a prayerful environment throughout the Stations.
- Perhaps your youth group could be involved in leading the Stations of the Cross for the Parish during Lent.
- Determine whether you will have one person read the prayer at the end of each station or whether it is something you would like everyone to say together.
- Don't forget to arrange enough copies of the resources you will need.

## **2. Use the existing Stations of the Cross in your parish:**

Many churches contain a set of the Stations of the Cross which are displayed through artwork (e.g. wooden carvings, sculptures, paintings, stain glass windows etc.). Take your group to the place of the stations and pray them whilst meditating on the scenes.

- Make sure you go into the Church beforehand to work out which set of stations your church includes.
- It may be a good idea to have a hand out for each person to join in with the prayers.
- If the stations are displayed on the walls of the church, make a pilgrimage around to each one.

## **3. Stations of the Cross outside:**

This is especially powerful if you are able to go to a peaceful place in nature or a large garden.

- Locate a large wooden cross – this may be something your parish already has or perhaps someone could make one especially.
- As you pray each station, move to a different place in the grounds. You may have a leader who can guide the group on how far to walk in between each station or you may like to put markers up around the grounds in advance with each station labelled.
- Depending on how big your space is, you can walk just a few metres, or even a few hundred metres.
- You can sing a simple, appropriate song as you walk. Alternately you may encourage people to walk in silence.

## **4. Virtual Stations of the Cross:**

Some websites have videos to lead you through each Station, for example, Busted Halo offers this set: <http://bustedhalo.com/video/virtual-stations-of-the-cross> . Each station can be downloaded separately (most are two minutes long) or you can watch them together as a set. Caritas Australia has a PowerPoint presentation of the Stations of the Cross: [www.caritas.org.au/docs/pc-2014/way-of-the-cross](http://www.caritas.org.au/docs/pc-2014/way-of-the-cross)

- Make sure you prepare your room carefully so that everyone is comfortable for the duration of the video and that they can see the screen and hear the music.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to set up the AV and ensure it is working correctly.



### ACTIVITY THREE: REFLECTION SONG

You may like to finish this session with a reflective song. This may be live music (if you have musicians in your group), or recorded music. Some songs that may be appropriate are listed below:

- *At the Foot of the Cross* Fr Robert Galea
- *Song of the Cross (Love lifted on the Cross)* Susan Hookeong Taylor, Ana Da Costa
- *Behold the wood of the Cross* Bob Hurd
- *Behold the Cross* Gary Pinto
- *How Deep the Father Love for Us* Stuart Townsend
- *Your are my King (Amazing Love)* Billy James Foote
- *Run to the Cross* Sarah Kroger
- *Lord Hear my Prayer* Taize
- *Jesus remember me* Taize

Suggested websites with Stations of the Cross for youth:

- Way of the Cross by Fr. Kevin O'Shea, C.Ss.R., [www.cssr.org.au/pray\\_with\\_us/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=263](http://www.cssr.org.au/pray_with_us/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=263)
- Passionists: [www.passionist.org/ministry/youthandyoungadult/youthstations](http://www.passionist.org/ministry/youthandyoungadult/youthstations)
- Life Teen: [www.archwinnipeg.ca/wcm-docs/youth\\_resources/youth\\_resource-1238107982.pdf](http://www.archwinnipeg.ca/wcm-docs/youth_resources/youth_resource-1238107982.pdf)



## Session four *Reading of the Passion*

### **Overview:**

This session is a dramatic reading of the Passion. The Gospel story has been broken into parts like a script, with characters and lines to say. The aim of this activity is to help each member in the group get more involved in the gospel as they contemplate what it was really like for Jesus. The different characters provide the perspective of the people who were directly involved.

### **What you need:**

- Several copies of the script
- A copy of the questions for each person from Appendix 3
- Music (for prayer at the end)

### **PREPARATION:**

Download the text for the Passion drama and assign roles to each member of your group (available at our website: [www.cam.org.au/youth/resources/online-resources](http://www.cam.org.au/youth/resources/online-resources)). There are 15 different parts however you can combine some of the smaller parts together if this will suit your group. (Parts: Narrator, Judas, Disciples, Jesus, Peter, accusers, High Priest, Chief Priests, Servant Girl, Bystander, Pilate, Pilate's wife, congregation, soldiers and centurion.)

If possible, set up the space in a circle – on the floor or on chairs. Try to create an atmosphere of reverence through playing quiet music.

### **ACTIVITY ONE: READ THROUGH THE PASSION.**

Introduce the activity by paraphrasing the text below:

On Palm Sunday the story of Jesus' Crucifixion is read out from start to finish. It can be hard to concentrate because we know the story so well and it is the longest Gospel reading of the year. Sometimes, Parishes choose to read the story in parts. We are going to have a go doing this.

(Give out copies of the script – perhaps people can share one between two. Ask for volunteers for each role or ask certain people to read each part.)

We are going to read through the story slowly. As this story is the Gospel we will begin with a prayer:

“Lord, we ask you to send your Holy Spirit to be with us as we read the story of your Crucifixion. Help us to sit still, concentrate and imagine what it was like when all of this was happening to you”. Amen

Signal for the narrator to start.



### **ACTIVITY TWO: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

After the story has finished, have a time of silence. You may like to play some quiet music and encourage your group to pray silently contemplating what they have just heard. See “session three” for some song ideas. If not too disruptive, people may like to spread out in the space to sit alone. Hand around the questions in for reflection located in the appendix.

After some time of reflection, encourage the group to come back together and share any new insights they have had. As with all personal sharing, encourage a culture of respect and always make this part optional.

# Other Lenten resources

## Short videos about Lent:

- Introduction to Lent: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAuB-3V46zk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAuB-3V46zk) (1:16)
- Ash Wednesday & Lent in Two Minutes [www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3L3c23MfCO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3L3c23MfCO) (2:21)
- 40 days in the desert: [youtu.be/NWKRhk-yYIO](http://youtu.be/NWKRhk-yYIO) (4:05)
- If Jesus had twitter: [youtu.be/pXleTZO8Wzs](http://youtu.be/pXleTZO8Wzs) (5:41)
- A Journey Through Lent [www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3HnjLF5F4A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3HnjLF5F4A) (3:40)

## Other free, online Lenten resources:

- Busted Halo have an online Lenten Calendar (link not available just yet but keep you eye out on: <http://bustedhalo.com> )
- Caritas *Project Compassion*: [www.caritas.org.au/docs/pc-2014/parish-kit](http://www.caritas.org.au/docs/pc-2014/parish-kit)
- Caritas online Lenten Calendar: [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/lenten-calendar](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/lenten-calendar)

## Activities to do or encourage:

- Watch a movie about Jesus' life e.g. "The Passion" or "Jesus of Nazareth"
- Attend a live performance of the Passion e.g. [www.passionplay.info/](http://www.passionplay.info/)
- Participate in an Ecumenical Stations of the Cross in your local community
- Make a visit to Ta Pinu Marian Centre in Bacchas Marsh where they have 14 large statues and wooden Crosses marking the Stations. Details: [www.rc.net/melbourne/tapinu/](http://www.rc.net/melbourne/tapinu/)

## Resources in the AOY library:

These resources and more can be borrowed from the AOY Youth Ministry Library

- The Wonderful Cross: Songs of Christ's Death and Resurrection (includes sheet music and guitar chords)
- Cross roads: National Pastoral Planning Handbook. Developed for the Journey of the visit of the WYD Cross and Icon visit in 2008, this book contains a number of suggestions on how to plan a Way of the Cross.
- The Passion of Christ: DVD of the movie.
- Alpha Omega Life Teen Retreat Guide: This contains a session on Lent and includes the Life Teen stations of the Cross
- Come Walk: A teen guide to the Stations of the Cross, by Life Teen
- Wellsprings of Hope: A five session Easter programme based on the Sunday liturgy

## Lenten resources that can be purchased:

- 2014 Lenten Program - Walking the way of Mercy and Simplicity, Catholic Adult Education Sydney, [www.caec.com.au/lenten/index.html](http://www.caec.com.au/lenten/index.html) , Cost \$8.00
- Encounter Lenten Program 2014, Wollongong Diocese, NSW: [dow.org.au/diocese/resources/lenten-program/item/lenten-program-2014-encounter](http://dow.org.au/diocese/resources/lenten-program/item/lenten-program-2014-encounter) Cost \$6.60
- Lent Companion <http://store.lifeteen.com/lenten-companion-2014.aspx> Cost:US\$4 + postage (cheaper when purchased in bulk)
- Come Walk: A teen Guide to Stations of the Cross, by Life Teen Cost: US\$3 + postage

## Credits:

- Passion reading taken from: [www.lectionarypage.net/Resources/PassionGospelsInParts.html](http://www.lectionarypage.net/Resources/PassionGospelsInParts.html)
- Lenten quiz taken from: [www.loyolapress.com/lenten-quiz.htm](http://www.loyolapress.com/lenten-quiz.htm)
- Heads and Tails game taken from St Peter Chanel Youth Group. Used with permission.
- Prayer at the end of session two taken from Caritas Australia Resources.
- Pope Francis' Lenten message taken from: [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/messages/lenten/documents/papa-francesco\\_20131226\\_messaggio-quaresima2014\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/messages/lenten/documents/papa-francesco_20131226_messaggio-quaresima2014_en.html)

# Appendix

## APPENDIX ONE – TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT LENT FROM SESSION ONE:

### Ten questions about Lent

1. How long does Lent last? (40 days)
2. When does it start? (Ash Wednesday)
3. What great feast does it lead to? (Easter)
4. What is its goal? (Spiritual renewal in Christ)
5. For whom does the Church pray especially during Lent? (Catechumens and people who have left the Church)
6. Which day of the week is not counted in the forty days of Lent? (Sunday)
7. Which word means “to give to those in need”? (Almsgiving)
8. How many full meals may be eaten on a fast day? (One)
9. Name a fast day in Lent. (Ash Wednesday or Good Friday)
10. What is an example of an act of penance which Catholics must do on Fridays during Lent? (Extra prayer e.g. go to Mass, self-denial e.g. Abstain from eating meat, helping others e.g. visiting the sick)

## APPENDIX TWO – HEADS OR TAILS GAME FROM SESSION ONE:

### “Heads or Tails”

Invite your group to stand up and explain that you will be saying a number of phrases about Lent – some of which are true and some of which are false! They need to choose which answer they think is TRUE. If they think answer A is true, they put their hands on their heads. If they think answer B is true, they put their hands on their tails (bottom). For “true or false” questions, heads is true and tails is false. After each statement is read out, the answer is given. All those who got it wrong have to sit down. Those who got it correct can proceed to the next questions. The game finishes when there is only one person left or you have run out of questions!

#### 1. The word Lent comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning:

- A. Spring, or
- B. Midwinter

Answer: Spring – this is the time of year the Easter season generally falls in the Northern hemisphere!

#### 2. The official (liturgical) colour of Lent is red representing penance. True or False?

Answer: False – it’s purple, representing royalty and repentance.

#### 3. In the church year, Lent is before Christmas. True or False?

Answer: False – the Church year starts with Advent.

#### 4. We celebrate Shrove Tuesday (or Pancake Tuesday) before Lent begins. Another name for Shrove Tuesday is Mardi Gras which means “Fat Tuesday”. True or False?

Answer: True.

#### 5. Mardi Gras also goes by “Carnivale” which comes from the Latin for:

- A. “Great feast”, or
- B. “Goodbye meat”

Answer: “Goodbye meat”

#### 6. Lent lasts for 40 uninterrupted days. True or False?

Answer: False – Sundays are not included in Lent.

**7. The forty days of Lent are a reminder of when Jesus spent forty days alone in the wilderness and is tempted by the Devil. True or False?**

Answer: True. It also recalls the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness.

**8. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when people have the sign of the cross made of ashes placed on their foreheads. These ashes are made by:**

- A. Burning palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday service, or**
- B. Burning old prayer books.**

Answer: Burning palm leaves.

**9. You must leave your ashes on face for the whole of Ash Wednesday. True or False?**

Answer: False – you can wash them off whenever you like!

**10. The ash is supposed to represent the story in which Jesus places dirt or ash on a blind man's eyes to make him see again. True or False?**

Answer: False. The ashes represent humility and our own mortality – from dust we came and to dust we shall return (Ecclesiastes 3:20).

**11. Many people give up something during Lent. The point of this practice is to show your willpower. True or False?**

Answer: False. It is a practice of self-denial that allows room in your life for God to do something new.

**12. During Lent you get a day off from fasting on Sundays. True or False?**

Answer: True. People traditionally do not fast on Sundays as Sundays are a reminder of the resurrection.

**13. We are allowed to eat meat on Fridays in Lent. True or false?**

Answer: True. In Australia, we must complete an act of penance on all Fridays during the year. This might be abstaining from meat, but it could also be doing another act of penance such as an act of service, or abstaining from entertainment. We are required to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

**14. Fasting is a common practice during Lent. The Church defines fasting as:**

- A. Eating bread and water the whole day, or**
- B. Eating one full meal only.**

Answer: B. One full meal, plus two small meals – the two small means cannot equal one full meal.

**15. Catholics are required to receive Holy Communion at least once during the Lenten/Easter season. True or false?**

Answer: True. This is to be done between Ash Wednesday and Trinity Sunday.

**16. Catholics are required to go to Confession at least once during the Lenten/Easter season. True or false?**

Answer: False. Catholics are required to confess their grave sins at least once a year, but it doesn't have to be during Lent.

**17. Which phrase is not spoken during mass in Lent:**

- A. "Alleluia", or**
- B. "Praise to you"**

Answer: B. "Alleluia" is the phrase that many churches abstain from saying in worship during Lent.

**18. The last day of Lent is:**

- A: Palm Sunday, or**
- B: Holy Thursday**

Answer: B. Technically, Lent ends just before the Mass of the Lord's Supper celebrated on Holy Thursday. The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar state that "Lent runs from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper exclusive." The Lenten fast, however, continues up until the vigil Mass of Holy Saturday.

### APPENDIX THREE – QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION FROM SESSION FOUR:

- Did something new stand out to me about the story this time? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Peter was willing (with the other disciples) to die with Jesus before disowning Him, though when the time came their commitment was not as strong as they thought. **How strong is your commitment to Jesus? Has it ever been tested?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus fell on the ground and was over overwhelmed with sorrow (to the point of death). Jesus sounds distressed with what is about to happen even to the point of asking God that if this doesn't have to happen please don't let it. **Have there been times when you've been scared to live God's will in your life?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Peter, and James and John (the two sons of Zebedee) were tired and then Jesus told them to sit and pray. "The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak". **Have there been times when we have desired to do good though our human nature kicks in you struggle to?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Facing a possible death, Peter lived up to Jesus' prophecy and denied Him three times before the rooster crowed. **How in our lives do we not deny Jesus? Are we willing to stand up for our beliefs in Christ?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry His cross. **Whose crosses do we help carry?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Many women present at Jesus' crucifixion had followed Him from Galilee to care for His needs. **How in this day and age can we care for Jesus?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus cried "Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When Jesus was about to die, He was scared and felt as though God had forsaken Him. **Have there been times when you have not been able to feel God's presence in your life?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- After the moment of Jesus' death, those who were guarding Jesus saw all that had happened and instantly recognised that He was the Son of God. **What does it mean for us to know that Jesus is the Son of God and that He gave His life for us? How does this express God's unconditional love for us?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX FOUR – POPE FRANCIS 2014 LENTEN MESSAGE:

[www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco\\_20131226\\_messaggio-quaresima2014\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20131226_messaggio-quaresima2014_en.html)

### *Lenten Message Of Our Holy Father Francis 2014*

*He became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich (cf. 2 Cor 8:9)*



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As Lent draws near, I would like to offer some helpful thoughts on our path of conversion as individuals and as a community. These insights are inspired by the words of Saint Paul: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9). The Apostle was writing to the Christians of Corinth to encourage them to be generous in helping the faithful in Jerusalem who were in need. What do these words of Saint Paul mean for us Christians today? What does this invitation to poverty, a life of evangelical poverty, mean for us today?

#### **1. Christ’s grace**

First of all, it shows us how God works. He does not reveal himself cloaked in worldly power and wealth but rather in weakness and poverty: “though He was rich, yet for your sake he became poor ...”. Christ, the eternal Son of God, one with the Father in power and glory, chose to be poor; he came amongst us and drew near to each of us; he set aside his glory and emptied himself so that he could be like us in all things (cf. Phil 2:7; Heb 4:15). God’s becoming man is a great mystery! But the reason for all this is his love, a love which is grace, generosity, a desire to draw near, a love which does not hesitate to offer itself in sacrifice for the beloved. Charity, love, is sharing with the one we love in all things. Love makes us similar, it creates equality, it breaks down walls and eliminates distances. God did this with us. Indeed, Jesus “worked with human hands, thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, he truly became one of us, like us in all things except sin.” (Gaudium et Spes, 22).



By making himself poor, Jesus did not seek poverty for its own sake but, as Saint Paul says “that by his poverty you might become rich”. This is no mere play on words or a catch phrase. Rather, it sums up God’s logic, the logic of love, the logic of the incarnation and the cross. God did not let our salvation drop down from heaven, like someone who gives alms from their abundance out of a sense of altruism and piety. Christ’s love is different! When Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan and was baptized by John the Baptist, he did so not because he was in need of repentance, or conversion; he did it to be among people who need forgiveness, among us sinners, and to take upon himself the burden of our sins. In this way he chose to comfort us, to save us, to free us from our misery. It is striking that the Apostle states that we were set free, not by Christ’s riches but by his poverty. Yet Saint Paul is well aware of the “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8), that he is “heir of all things” (Heb 1:2).

So what is this poverty by which Christ frees us and enriches us? It is his way of loving us, his way of being our neighbour, just as the Good Samaritan was neighbour to the man left half dead by the side of the road (cf. Lk 10:25ff ). What gives us true freedom, true salvation and true happiness is the compassion, tenderness and solidarity of his love. Christ's poverty which enriches us is his taking flesh and bearing our weaknesses and sins as an expression of God's infinite mercy to us. Christ's poverty is the greatest treasure of all: Jesus' wealth is that of his boundless confidence in God the Father, his constant trust, his desire always and only to do the Father's will and give glory to him. Jesus is rich in the same way as a child who feels loved and who loves its parents, without doubting their love and tenderness for an instant. Jesus' wealth lies in his being the Son; his unique relationship with the Father is the sovereign prerogative of this Messiah who is poor. When Jesus asks us to take up his "yoke which is easy", he asks us to be enriched by his "poverty which is rich" and his "richness which is poor", to share his filial and fraternal Spirit, to become sons and daughters in the Son, brothers and sisters in the firstborn brother (cf. Rom 8:29).

It has been said that the only real regret lies in not being a saint (L. Bloy); we could also say that there is only one real kind of poverty: not living as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ.



## 2. Our witness

We might think that this "way" of poverty was Jesus' way, whereas we who come after him can save the world with the right kind of human resources. This is not the case. In every time and place God continues to save mankind and the world through the poverty of Christ, who makes himself poor in the sacraments, in his word and in his Church, which is a people of the poor. God's wealth passes not through our wealth, but invariably and exclusively through our personal and communal poverty, enlivened by the Spirit of Christ.

In imitation of our Master, we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it. Destitution is not the same as poverty: destitution is poverty without faith, without support, without hope. There are three types of destitution: material, moral and spiritual. Material destitution is what is normally called poverty, and affects those living in conditions opposed to human dignity: those who lack basic rights and needs such as food, water, hygiene, work and the opportunity to develop and grow culturally. In

response to this destitution, the Church offers her help, her diakonia, in meeting these needs and binding these wounds which disfigure the face of humanity. In the poor and outcast we see Christ's face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ. Our efforts are also directed to ending violations of human dignity, discrimination and abuse in the world, for these are so often the cause of destitution. When power, luxury and money become idols, they take priority over the need for a fair distribution of wealth. Our consciences thus need to be converted to justice, equality, simplicity and sharing.

No less a concern is moral destitution, which consists in slavery to vice and sin. How much pain is caused in families because one of their members – often a young person - is in thrall to alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography! How many people no longer see meaning in life or prospects for the future, how many have lost hope! And how many are plunged into this destitution by unjust social conditions, by unemployment, which takes away their dignity as breadwinners, and by lack of equal access to education and health care. In such cases, moral destitution can be considered impending suicide. This type of destitution, which also causes financial ruin, is invariably linked to the spiritual destitution which we

experience when we turn away from God and reject his love. If we think we don't need God who reaches out to us through Christ, because we believe we can make do on our own, we are headed for a fall. God alone can truly save and free us.



The Gospel is the real antidote to spiritual destitution: wherever we go, we are called as Christians to proclaim the liberating news that forgiveness for sins committed is possible, that God is greater than our sinfulness, that he freely loves us at all times and that we were made for communion and eternal life. The Lord asks us to be joyous heralds of this message of mercy and hope! It is thrilling to experience the joy of spreading this good news, sharing the treasure entrusted to us, consoling broken hearts and offering hope to our brothers and sisters experiencing darkness. It means following and imitating Jesus, who sought out the poor and sinners as a shepherd lovingly seeks his lost sheep. In union with Jesus, we can courageously open up new paths of evangelization and human promotion.

Dear brothers and sisters, may this Lenten season find the whole Church ready to bear witness to all those who live in material, moral and spiritual destitution the Gospel message of the merciful love of God our Father, who is ready to embrace everyone in Christ. We can do this to the extent that we imitate Christ who became poor and enriched us by his poverty. Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt.

May the Holy Spirit, through whom we are “as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything” (2 Cor 6:10), sustain us in our resolutions and increase our concern and responsibility for human destitution, so that we can become merciful and act with mercy. In expressing this hope, I likewise pray that each individual member of the faithful and every Church community will undertake a fruitful Lenten journey. I ask all of you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you safe.

From the Vatican, 26 December 2013  
Feast of Saint Stephen, Deacon and First Martyr  
FRANCISCUS

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