



**Catholic Archdiocese of
Canberra and Goulburn**

Lenten Message 2018

Days of Fasting and Reparation

The forty days of Lent are upon us earlier this year!

We have returned from our holidays of January. The return to work, school and the normal routine activities of our year are quickly occupying our time and energies.

Yet, the annual Lenten penitential journey we now make towards Easter is here!

In the midst of this sudden change of pace in our lives, let us try our best to enter into the grace Lent offers us all.

Our ancient yet ever new Christian Tradition offers us during Lent the enduring disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These prepare us to celebrate worthily the central tenet of our faith – the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, Our Lord and Saviour. In the Risen Jesus darkness and despair have been forever defeated by light and hope.

Last December 2017 the Australian Youth Festival in Sydney proved a stunning moment of light and hope of the Holy Spirit for the thousands of youth gathered. Our own diocese was well represented. It officially launched the YEAR OF YOUTH for 2018.

Yet, incredibly at the same time, the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, was published. It has showcased moments of great darkness and despair not simply in courageous victims but also their family and friends and all of us.

This tragedy of sexual abuse ought become a particular prayer focus of our Lenten discipline this year. The Bishops of Australia have requested that the four days from Ash Wednesday (14th Feb till 17th Feb) be dedicated in a special way to fasting and reparation in sorrow for child abuse and for the healing of victims.

I am confident that parishes and communities will be able to respond appropriately to this request. Liturgical resources are readily available to assist.

My prayer is that our spiritual journey of Lent to the Easter Mysteries assist us to shift our focus afresh onto Jesus, our hope and lasting peace.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn