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Bishop of Broken Bay

Message for BBNeighbourhoods
16 February 2021

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

The Season of Lent is upon us once again as tomorrow is Ash Wednesday. Strangely, it is one of my favourite times in our liturgical year because of the potential that is hidden within the Season. There is a simplicity to our prayer and worship during Lent that seems to unclutter life and liberate us from the grind of a fast and furious world.

While I love the dimensions of prayer and fasting, I particularly appreciate the call of Jesus who gave his disciples a new commandment of Christ, “even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34). Charity means loving as Jesus loved. In the community of the Church, we seek to be witnesses to *caritas Christi* – the charity of Christ. It is more than simply doing good or registering as benefactors for worthwhile projects. The foundation to our charity, especially during Lent, is the example of Christ, who laid down his life for our salvation and for the salvation of the world. No greater love has any man or woman than this (cf John 15:13).

While the mission of the Church is understood to be spiritual in nature, we also embrace all the temporal aspects of human life. This Lent, I ask how might we do this with hearts and minds filled with the charity of Christ? How might we live and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ so that all people, without exception, might know and feel the loving embrace of God? As the community of the Church of Broken Bay, how can we acknowledge, respect, and love the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised, and those who find themselves burdened by adversity, vulnerability, or powerlessness?

Inspired by the Word of God and nourished by the sacraments, I invite you to join with me as together we strive to bring to bear the charity of Christ which gives authentic witness to the faith we profess. The practice of charity reveals the “new commandment” which makes known to the world the new life of the children of God.

May the power of the Holy Spirit, who reveals the charity of Christ, strengthen us in our resolve to be disciples of Jesus in the world. The charity of Christ urges us!

+Anthony