



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Lent 2025

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we approach another season of Lent, there is no question that our world faces many challenges. In our own country of Canada, there is high anxiety and uncertainty. It seems so easy to feel overwhelmed; however, we don't have to feel this way.

We are also in the midst of a Jubilee Year that focuses on the virtue of hope. I believe that this is precisely what we need at this moment in time. We need to be 'pilgrims of hope'.

In his letter of introduction to the Jubilee Year entitled "Hope Does Not Disappoint", Pope Francis states, "In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring."

There are some pundits who say that the threats facing our nation are not all bad. They believe that there is also a positive side to what we are experiencing. It seems that people are coming together as we focus on what unites rather than divides. Relationships are being strengthened on many levels.

In a similar way, Lent is able to do the same for us, although not in a threatening way. As people of faith, we enter these forty days unified in our hope that, in the end, relationships will be strengthened. This happens when we focus on the three pillars of Lent: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving.

Lent promotes greater union with God, ourselves, and others. In Prayer, we focus on our relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. We allow ourselves to be immersed in divine love. In Fasting, we discipline ourselves so that we can say no to self and yes to Christ. We grow in discernment and self-knowledge. In Almsgiving, we focus on others in a spirit of love and generosity. We use our time, talent, and treasure to assist those in need.

Ultimately, the forty days of Lent enkindle hope as we spiritually consider 'the good things to come'. Those good things are found in what we celebrate at the end of Lent: the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

It is St. John who reminds us that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life”. This is the mystery of salvation, and it provides the greatest hope in this life and in the life to come. We are loved, so we need not be afraid.

During these challenging times let us make this Lent a true ‘pilgrimage of hope’.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gerard Bergie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines