

# Care for Life

## Overview of Lent Program

Lent is a season for renewal, for re-focusing our lives, a time to prepare ourselves to enter again the mysterious journey that takes us from Jesus' dying on the cross to his rising from the dead.

Jesus' dying would make no sense if he did not also rise again. In light of his resurrection, everything in Jesus' life – including the words he speaks to us – takes on deeper meaning.

In Lent we are called to let Jesus' teaching sink deeply into us and 'turn around' ('repent') some of those comfortable patterns of thinking and behaving that creep into our lives so easily, but that prevent us from growing into the people God is always calling us to be.

Renewal comes when we

- listen to the Word of God spoken to us in the Gospels,
- let it challenge those comfortable patterns that hold us back, and then
- change behaviours that prevent us from receiving the fulness of life Jesus came to bring.

Lent is an intensely practical time for Christians, and in Lent this year West Australians face the additional threat of laws to introduce so-called 'assisted dying' or 'euthanasia' which would allow a doctor to deliberately end a patient's life.

Euthanasia breaches one of the most fundamental laws of human social life, enshrined in the Judeo-Christian tradition, that says one person should not kill another.

*Care for Life* in Lent 2019 is intended to prompt an 'examination of conscience' in our faith, offering human and spiritual insight into the truth of the Christian life as we find it in the Gospels.

It has a direction and a purpose shaped by Luke's Gospel, in which we often see Jesus sitting down to table as guest in someone's house. Australian scripture scholar Fr Brendan Byrne SJ calls Luke's Gospel "the hospitality of God" because, as he says

*The One who comes as visitor and guest in fact becomes host and offers hospitality in which human beings and, potentially, the entire world, can become truly human, be at home, can know salvation in the depths of their hearts.<sup>1</sup>*

Lent is a time for 'coming home' to receive the hospitality of God.

Lent invites us to personal and communal growth, recognising that each of us is called to respond personally and actively, to make a practical difference in our own lives and in our society.

We hope it will also inspire you to answer the 'call to act', and 'have your say' in the public debate around euthanasia.

1. Brendan Byrne SJ, *The Hospitality of God. A Reading of Luke's Gospel*. Strathfield: St Pauls 2000. 4. As with all Fr Byrne's work, I have found this text very easy to read as well as spiritually and pastorally inspiring.