



Anglican Network in Canada

A LENTEN PASTORAL LETTER
from
The Right Reverend Donald F Harvey
Moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada
Ash Wednesday - 2012

Dear Friends in Christ:

We all are aware of the rapidity of change in so many aspects of our lives. In our own generation that has become more evident than in any other era of history. The development of the microchip has transformed communication beyond our wildest imagination, and information that even at the start of my ministry would take weeks to circulate now takes mere seconds as we hit “send” on our computer screens. These computers no longer are restricted to our desks, or even our laps, but are in our purses, pockets, and with the school books of our children. And there are those who predict that even these books soon will be replaced by electronic gadgets.

We now find ourselves with such a flow of instant “knowledge” that we have no choice but to be selective in what we read and especially in what we save. We also have to make decisions as to what we share and how we do it. There is an ongoing danger of overload, since unlike our computers, there is a very definite limit as to what we can absorb and retain.

Long before this age though, the compilers of our calendars realized that it was necessary to build in a season which by its nature would involve slowing down, taking time to reflect upon the price paid for our salvation and how we should be responding. Their obvious choice for such an exercise was to use that period in the life of Jesus when he went into the wilderness to reflect upon his coming ministry and what it would involve.

While the Imposition of Ashes has become quite popular in our Ash Wednesday liturgies, even for parishes that normally would not be using such practices, it often happens that the real themes of self-denial, fasting and penitence, are as short lived as the smudge of ash on the forehead.

Modern liturgical trends have done much to emphasize the *joy* that comes with being a follower of Jesus Christ, but often they divert us from the realization of the constant necessity of self examination, repentance, confession, and renewal in order for that real sense of *joy* to be complete. When we realize what we were, where we are, and what, through the Grace of Christ we may become, then, and only then, do we get a glimpse of what it means to be part of the new life.



As we plan our way forward in our young Diocese, which we call the *Anglican Network in Canada*, we must see ourselves as that householder in **Mathew 13:52** who takes out of his treasure things new and old. Let us rejoice when we can take both our old hallowed traditions and the new expressions of them, and combine them in our mission to bring Christ to a world that often seems so topsy-turvy. This must begin with each individual member “catching the flame” before we can begin to spread it to others. May I suggest that we use this season of Lent to concentrate on doing exactly that.

During Lent I always like to dwell on a small portion of scripture or a hymn and repeat it at least once every day during the season. I believe, as we bath our souls in this truth, the Holy Spirit will soften the hardness of our hearts and unfold new spiritual riches. This year you might like to share with me the words of one of the verses of a moving hymn by Elizabeth Clephane:

*Upon the cross of Jesus
My eye by faith can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me;
And from my smitten heart with tears
Two wonders I confess,
The wonders of his glorious love,
And my own worthlessness.*

It is my fond prayer that this sombre season will be a rewarding time for us all, and as the flame is re-kindled, may we approach the Joy of Easter full of new zeal and determination to share our message, “not only with our lips, but in our lives”!

Your Bishop and fellow pilgrim,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the name "Arnold" in a cursive script.