



Anglican Network in Canada

THE LENTEN PASTORAL LETTER OF THE RIGHT REVEREND DONALD F HARVEY LENT 2010.

My dear Friends in the Anglican Network in Canada

It is my intention to make this the shortest Lenten Pastoral Letter I ever have written, not because there is so little to reflect upon, but because I realize that by now many of you have preaching plans already made for the Sundays in Lent, which I do not want to interfere with by imposing a long discourse to be read.

Yet, I do not want to let the beginning of this most Holy Season to go by without taking the opportunity to greet you all, and in so doing, again remind one another of this important part of our heritage.

The season of Lent, even before it acquired its name, was kept in the primitive Church as a time of solemnity, fasting, prayer and study. Patterned on the great 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness prior to starting his public ministry, it was an intense time when new converts were made - and when the lapsed were brought back to the fold. In many ways it sounds like a modern blueprint for “church planting”.

Our Church of England roots gave the season its name (from the lengthening of days) and a liturgy known as the Communion Service, which some of you around my age may remember participating in on Ash Wednesday. In Canada, our 1962 edition of the BCP replaced it with A Penitential Service, calling on all to use this season as a time for growing deeper in our relationship to the Lord Jesus. It insisted, quite rightly, I feel, that this growth only could be effective when it began with sincere **repentance**.

Without that repentance, the ashes many of us received last Wednesday, are no more than a novelty or outward display. Without it being predominant throughout our services in the next six weeks, we cannot hope to experience the real joy that comes when we commemorate the risen Lord striding in triumph from the tomb, having borne our punishment and destroyed the enemy of death.

With this in mind, I am calling on all of us to add one extra exercise to our Lenten Devotions. It makes no difference if you prefer formal liturgical prayers or free flowing extemporary ones – or hopefully a healthy combination of both. But it will be a powerful witness if all of us add the Collect for Ash Wednesday into our daily prayer life. I ask that this be **prayed**

sometime during every service, every bible study, every prayer group gathering, and above all when we say our own personal prayers.

I want us to do this, not just because the words are so very meaningful, but also because as we move forward, still in our infancy as a new expression of Anglicanism, every member of ANiC, from coast to coast, will be offering the same prayer to our Heavenly Father for the forty day period.

That being involved in praying in this manner will put us in the right spiritual atmosphere for this Season, while at the same time drawing us closer to one another – and to HIM – is the heartfelt desire and petition of

Your friend and Moderator,

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

+Donald

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For individuals or congregations not comfortable with this traditional language, slightly modernized versions of this same prayer can be found in some of the liturgies you generally use. Feel free to act accordingly.