



PASTORAL LETTER

For Pentecost And The Year Of Grace



PENTECOST...THE YEAR OF GRACE AND FAITH BEGINS

Given at Broome,
Ascension Sunday 2012

The Feast of Pentecost celebrates new life in the Spirit. It is a remembrance of great significance because it recalls for us the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and in that context may well be termed the birthday of The Church. After the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit they embarked on the missionary task given to them by Jesus Christ to baptize all nations. The work of the Church thus began as she exercised her vocation as the mystical body of Christ, announcing the Good News to a needy world.

In the Kimberley, in a number of places, as has often been the case in the past, there will be appropriate celebrations and special assemblies to rejoice in the Feast Day of Pentecost 2012. However, Pentecost Day this year holds an extra significance for us as it marks the beginning of the Year of Grace proclaimed recently by the Bishops of Australia. Along with and complementary to the Year of Faith announced by The Holy Father Pope Benedict, this period of twelve months has been set aside for us to contemplate how we might better live the Gospel as baptized Christians and how we

might better assist others to do the same. Our prayer begins with our desire that in whatever we say or do Christ may be clearly present in our words and actions. This is a call to witness to Christ, to be Christ-like and to focus our attention on our need for communal and personal conversion through penance. We seek a change in favour of goodness and justice for our world through the acknowledgement of the presence of Christ in our midst and together we strive in communion so that we might live the gifts of the Holy Spirit we received in Confirmation.

Each Kimberley Parish is to arrange a launch of the Year of Grace and Faith on Pentecost Sunday. The form of that launch is up to each Parish. I trust that, for the launch of this auspicious occasion and the organization of the Year to follow, tasks will be entrusted to as many parishioners as possible including Parish Councils, Church Leaders' groups, School Principals, Religious Sisters and Brothers all in close collaboration with the Parish Priest.

At a meeting before Easter, Priests, Pastoral Associates and Principals discussed the Year of Grace. Some wonderful ideas emerged as to how this appointed time might be

announced in parishes and then celebrated over the next twelve months. Notes of discussions shared by the regional groups who met in Broome have been circulated; hopefully they will be of great assistance to the planning process for each parish and for the Diocese as a whole.

The Bishops of Australia have suggested that we approach the Year of Grace by asking "Where is Christ in all this?" In all our work, our recreation, our family life, our friendships, our prayer, our relationships and our careers we ask: "Where is Christ in all this?"

The Year of Grace is a "time of slow retreat" urging us, through reflection and prayer, to reform our lives and transform our lives in Christ our Brother, our Way, our Light, our

Shepherd, our Lord and Saviour.

I invite you to participate in this Holy Year of Grace and Faith with generous energy, commitment and a deep sense of your calling to the higher things of life. May this be an opportunity for you to be truly the person God has called you to be.

Saint Seraphim of Sarov once said: "The true aim of our Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit of God." This Holy Spirit communicates Grace to us, just as at the First Pentecost Grace was bestowed on the Apostles. In our Confirmation we are anointed with knowledge and a true teaching of all those things which will enable us to live as God has invited us to live – in wholeness and in fulfillment, fully human, in the image of God.

Most Rev Christopher Saunders
Bishop of Broome and the Kimberley

We are called to live the Gifts of the Holy Spirit given to us in Confirmation

wonder and awe courage
wisdom right understanding
 judgement
reverence knowledge