



## Lent 2024

For our reflection in Lent this year, Pope Francis uses the theme; **“Through the desert God leads us”**. Lent is the season of grace in which the desert can become once more – in the words of the prophet Hosea – the place of our first love (cf. *Hos 2:16-17*). *God shapes his people, he enables us to leave our slavery behind* and experience a Passover from death to life. Like a bridegroom, the Lord draws us once more to himself with His great love. During this holy season of prayer we ask the Lord to help cleanse us of those things that keep us away from Him. We strive to deepen our relationship with Jesus, and even if it is a struggle for us, we know that God never abandons us. As Pope Francis notes: “God has not grown weary of us. Let us welcome Lent as the great season in which he reminds us: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (*Ex 20:2*). Lent is a *season of conversion, a time of freedom.*”

As we share in this holy season together, let us see Lent as a true time of renewal for us. Even by sharing in little things, little gestures of prayer, moments of fasting and sharing, we can make a difference in our lives and in our relationships with God and with one another. A daily prayer with our family, frequenting Mass during the week, a daily or weekly rosary, little acts of charity, visiting a friend or an elderly person who is alone, a gift to a food bank or a support centre for the needy, there are many little ways we can make Lent a special time of renewal for us, changing our habits and lifestyles to be more like Jesus. In particular we reach out to our sisters and brothers in developing countries in our world who are striving for freedom and equality. Through our generosity to **Development and Peace** we make our support real for them.

Lent, we celebrate it each year together and we make our spiritual lives stronger and deepen our faith both as individuals and as a community through our prayer and efforts. Again as Pope Francis notes: *“To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope”*. May this season be for each of us, a time of great **Hope** and a time of great **Renewal**. The Holy Spirit will guide us. Let us open our hearts to Him.

Bishop Fred Colli