

Catholic
Archdiocese
of Adelaide



**A PASTORAL LETTER
FOR LENT 2026**

PEACE BE WITH YOU

Encountering the Risen Christ



**To God's Holy People in the
Archdiocese of Adelaide.**



My dear sisters and brothers in Christ, as we enter this holy season of Lent, we do so still walking in the grace of the Jubilee Year 2025.

Pope Leo's first words to the world were "Peace be with you". These words echo the greeting of the Risen Christ to his frightened disciples. These simple yet profound words are not merely a wish or blessing, but an encounter with the One who speaks them. They invite us to meet the Lord Jesus himself, the Prince of Peace, who stands among us even now, offering what only he can give.

1. Christ's Peace in a Troubled World

When Jesus appeared to his disciples on that first Easter evening, they were locked in a room, paralysed by fear. The One they had followed was dead. Their dreams lay shattered. The authorities might come for them next. Their world had collapsed.

Into that locked room, into that paralysing fear, came Jesus. Not with recriminations, not with demands, but with a simple greeting: "Peace be with you." And in speaking those words, he showed them his hands and his side—the wounds of his passion, now transformed into signs of victory over death itself.

This is the Lord Jesus who greets each of us today. Not as a distant memory from two thousand years ago; not merely as a moral teacher whose wisdom we try to follow, but rather as the Risen Lord who is alive, present, and actively offering us his peace. The Lord Jesus comes to us in our locked rooms: our anxieties, our divisions, our fears, and speaks the same words to each of us directly: "Peace be with you."

2. The One Who Makes Peace Possible

We live in an era marked by profound anxiety. Economic uncertainty troubles families struggling to make ends meet. Political polarisation fractures countries and communities. The climate crisis looms over future generations. Wars rage, displacing millions. Social media amplifies our fears while offering only the illusion of connection. Mental health challenges have reached crisis levels, particularly among our young people. People hunger for meaning, belonging, and peace, yet these seem ever more elusive.

The events of the 14th December, 2025 at Bondi Beach, when violence shattered the peace of an ordinary afternoon in our Australian community shocked us all. In the aftermath, we witnessed both the worst and best of humanity: senseless violence, but also extraordinary courage, solidarity, and care for strangers.

Where do we turn in such times? Not to our own resources, which quickly run dry. Not to political solutions, which address symptoms but cannot heal the human heart. Not to the false prophets of nostalgia, who promise comfort in retreating to an imagined past.

We turn to the Risen One, the One who conquered death, who rose victorious, who breathed the Holy Spirit upon his disciples and sent them forth. We turn to the One who, even now, stands in our midst and says directly to each of us: "Peace be with you."

This is not the peace that the world gives which is fragile, conditional, and dependent on favourable circumstances. This is the peace that flows from the Lord Jesus himself, from his cross and resurrection. It is a peace that holds us even in suffering, that sustains us through uncertainty, that transforms us even as the world around us seems to be falling apart.

Jesus calls us to see his face in every person, to recognise that there is no "us" and "them" but only "us". One human family for whom Christ died and rose. When we exclude others, create categories of worthy and unworthy, or build walls between ourselves and those we consider different, we deny the fundamental reality that Christ came for all, that his peace is offered to all, that his mission embraces all.

3. Christ's Call Beyond Nostalgia

When the present feels overwhelming and the future uncertain, the temptation to retreat into the past grows stronger. We hear calls to return to supposedly simpler times, to restore old certainties, to make things as they once were.

But faith is not found in nostalgia. The Lord Jesus is the One who says, "Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5). He is the One who constantly surprises us, challenges us, calls us forward into a future we cannot yet see but must trust him to reveal.

When Jesus appeared to his disciples, he didn't invite them to mourn that which was lost. Rather he showed them his wounds. Yes, the past mattered, the suffering was real, however those very wounds had been transformed into the means of salvation. He breathed the Holy Spirit upon them. He sent them out on mission. He called them forward, not backward.

The peace the Lord Jesus offers is not found by turning back but by following him forward in faith. It is not the peace of unchanging certainty, rather the peace of knowing we are held by an unchanging God as we navigate change.



4. Sent by the Risen Christ

"Peace be with you," Jesus said to his disciples. And then, in the same breath: "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

This is the heart of Christian mission: we are sent by the Lord Jesus himself. Here in the Archdiocese of Adelaide, we have embarked on our own Diocesan Synod this year, gathering under these very words. This synodal process is not primarily about organisational restructuring. It is about learning to listen for Christ's voice as he sends us forth. It is about discerning together where Holy Spirit is calling us and how we are to participate in his mission. It is about making the Gospel credible to the people of our time.

The synodal way invites us to recognise that Christ speaks through the entire People of God. When we gather to listen to one another, we are seeking to hear the voice of the Risen Lord who promised to be with us always.

As we prepare for our Archdiocesan Synod, we do so knowing that Christ sends us not to serve ourselves but to be agents of his peace and reconciliation in a divided world.



5. Lenten Practices of Encountering Christ

This Lent offers us a privileged time to deepen our encounter with the Risen Jesus who speaks peace to us:

Prayer becomes a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus who invites us into his presence. Can we sit in silence before him, bringing our locked rooms and paralysing fears, and allowing him to breathe his Spirit upon us?

Fasting becomes a way of making room for the Lord Jesus in our overfilled lives. What might we release in order to be more available to his surprising grace?

Almsgiving becomes a participation in Lord's own mission of mercy. How can our acts of charity be expressions of the peace we have received from him?

6. Practical Steps for Meeting Christ this Lent 2026

I invite you to concrete practices for encountering the Risen Lord:

First, spend time in prayer each day with the Gospel accounts of Jesus appearing to his disciples after the resurrection. Place yourself in that locked room. Hear Jesus speak your name. Receive his peace.

Second, bring your locked rooms to Christ in the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation). Let him breathe his Spirit of forgiveness upon you. Experience the peace that flows from his mercy.

Third, ask the Lord Jesus each day: "Where are you sending me?" Be open to surprises. Listen for his voice in Scripture, in the needs around you, in the promptings of the Spirit.

Fourth, practice encountering Christ in others, especially those whose experience differs from yours. Jesus promised that what we do for the least of his brothers and sisters, we do for him.

Fifth, participate in communal prayer and discernment within your parish as we prepare for our upcoming Archdiocesan Synod. When we gather in Jesus' name, he is present among us.



7. The Promise of Easter

Lent always looks toward Easter, and makes no sense without it. It looks toward the One who conquered death, who rose victorious, who appears to us even now with the greeting "Peace be with you."

The peace the Lord Jesus offers is the peace of Easter morning. The peace that comes not from avoiding death but from following Jesus through death to resurrection. Our anxious world needs witnesses to the Risen Christ, people who have encountered him personally, who know that his love is stronger than all that threatens us, who can say with confidence: "I have seen the Lord."

This Lent, may we each experience a deeper, more personal encounter with the Lord Jesus. May we hear him speak our names. May we receive his peace. May we breathe in his Spirit. May we go forth as he sends us, bearing witness to the One who is alive, who is present, who makes all things new.

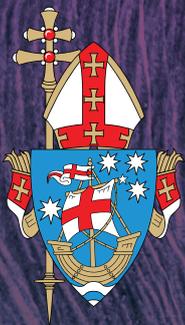
The Risen Lord stands among us even now and says: "Peace be with you."

Come, let us, together, go to meet him.

+ *Pat O'Regan*

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Archbishop of Adelaide
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