

The Archbishop's Pastoral Letter for Lent 2015 (Unofficial translation)

My dear Sisters and Brothers,

Let me address this pastoral Letter to you as we begin this Lenten season together. We are on our journey towards Easter, the feast of the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

At Mass, and particularly at Easter, Christ renews his Church - our Church - through his body and blood and through the Holy Spirit. Easter therefore always marks a fresh start.

We are setting out on this road, furthermore, in a new context. From now on, persons who are newly recruited by the Church will not receive State salaries. It will therefore be up to all of us to ensure that those who work for the Church in the future are remunerated.

Religious education classes will also cease to be given in schools. It will therefore be up to us to develop a parish-based catechesis capable of enabling our children and young people to perceive the Mystery of Christ.

Moreover, we will also have to take on board responsibility for the running and upkeep of our religious buildings.

These are substantial changes which require a reorganisation of our Church, if we are to meet the demands of the mission, entrusted to us by Christ, of proclaiming the Gospel.

Lent is the season during which we are called on to shake off our consumerist habits, so as to be more open to an encounter with our Lord, more open to an encounter with our brothers and sisters.

But the way we have lived our Christian faith in the past may also have come close to being a consumer attitude. We forgot that Church no longer means just the Bishop and his clergy, and that, on the contrary, Church is made up of all of us.

Each and every one of us shares responsibility for this Church of ours. Each and every one of us is a member of the People of God, always moving

along the road. What our Church now needs is a little more in terms of financial resources, and a great deal more in terms of volunteers, and helping hands.

Our Church is frequently targeted in the media: justified criticism is to be found alongside comments which spring from ignorance, bigotry and even, occasionally, hatred.

But this has always been the case throughout the history of the Church, even in our little country of Luxembourg. What is far more serious than external attacks, however, is a lack of unity within our own ranks. Such disunity would result in our ceasing to be the People of God, led by him towards its future; rather we would become a sad remnant of the past, showing the face of mediocrity, in which it is difficult to read even a hint of Gospel joy.

Yes, the purpose of Easter, and of the path of self-denial preceding it, is to lead us into profound joy.

I urge you, one and all: above all else, during this season of Lent, read the Gospels; make time each day for a period of prayer and quiet.

If we do that, we can be sure not to miss out on the joy of Easter!

Yes, my dear Sisters and Brothers, many things may be taken away from us, but never that hope and joy, whose only source is our Lord.

In deep communion with you all,

Luxembourg, 11th February 2015

+Jean-Claude Hollerich
Archbishop of Luxembourg