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### **ARCHBISHOP'S LENTEN MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS**

Dear brothers and sisters-in-Christ

Lent is a time of preparation for Holy Week, which recalls the events linked to the Passion of Christ and culminates in Easter, the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is a period of renewal and a time for Christians to take time for religious reflection and contemplation and focus on charitable deeds to help us draw closer to God.

To help us with our reflection, the Singapore Pastoral Institute has prepared a reflection booklet entitled "Led by the Spirit into New Life". I hope each of you have taken a copy and are using it with your family, neighborhood group or Small Christian Community.

Giving time to prayer will help us draw closer to Jesus and share in His compassionate love. The life of Jesus showed that He identified with the poor and destitute and was extremely sensitive to their needs.

The poor and needy are around us even today: the abused and abandoned children; the elderly, sick and the suffering; migrant workers who have been exploited and those who are displaced. In our busyness, we easily forget them. Yet Jesus urges charity and compassion and presents almsgiving as a necessary part of Christian life.

We have many Catholic charities that carry out work for the poor and community. Under the umbrella of the Catholic Social and Community Council are 15 such affiliate members whose work touches the lives of more than 40,000 beneficiaries. CSCC is now tasked with conducting our annual Charities Week campaign.

This weekend, the Charities Week 2008 envelopes are being distributed. Please collect one. I encourage you to give generously to help and support the good works of our Catholic charities. You may also wish to give beyond your financial resources to include your time and talent. It is by our going beyond the boundaries of our own community and self interest to give something of ourselves that we experience the true joy of sacrificial giving.

Jesus is our best role model in almsgiving - "He loved us, and gave Himself up for us." That is the giving we need to imitate.

May God bless you!

Yours in Christ,

Archbishop Nicholas Chia