

A Letter from the Archbishop of Sydney to the Laity of the Church of England in the Diocese of Sydney.

My Dear Friend,

I ventured to issue a Pastoral Letter at the beginning of the year, in which I pointed out the grave spiritual importance of the present national and world-wide crisis. This crisis provides a great opportunity for helping the people to recognise, and to respond to, the claims of God upon their lives.

I understand that the approaching season of Lent is to be used in your parish with a view to taking full spiritual advantage of this opportunity. I am, therefore, venturing to send to you a personal letter, asking you to do what you can to making the effort successful in your Church. Your Rector will provide you with full information about the plans which he has formed for Lent. He will have devoted much time, thought, and prayer to these plans; and I commend them to your thought and prayer.

It is not necessary for me to remind you that the Clergy cannot do this work without the hearty assistance of the people. The responsibility for God's work rests upon us all, Clergy and Laity alike. Every individual counts for much in this great matter. Do not think that you are unimportant for God. He will make great use of you, if you serve Him willingly; on the other hand, your example and influence may tell heavily against His cause, if you stand on one side. Very earnestly do I appeal to you to throw your weight on His side, and actively help your appointed leaders in the great cause.

First of all I would ask you to attend the Church Services regularly throughout Lent. You know well enough what a difference a large congregation makes to the heartiness of a Service. The congregation is made up of individuals each of whom encourages the Clergy, and heartens the other people, by their very presence in Church. On the other hand, a half empty Church is depressing to all. Make up your mind to attend in order to help the Clergy and people, as well as to get benefit for yourself. Above all, attend because God asks you to worship Him in fellowship with other Christians.

Then I venture to suggest that you remember the work of your Parish in your daily prayers. Surely Christ's command that we should pray is a sufficient reason for prayer, and a proof of its wonderful power. There will also be other ways by which you may practically assist your Clergy.

Finally, may I ask you to bring all your affairs in prayer before God. This is a time of grave anxiety for us all; but we are told to cast our care upon Him, because He cares for us. An honest and living faith in God is the one and only solution of all life's troubles. He wants you; He calls for you; His voice of love is heard speaking through the very troubles that are crowding upon us. "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

I commend you to that love which pleads with you and promises you all that you need for this world and the next!

Yours sincerely,

JOHN CHARLES SYDNEY.