



Diocese of Port Pirie Chancery

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Pastoral Letter to the Christian Faithful of the Diocese of Port Pirie

The Feasts of All Saints and All Souls

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ

This year these two Feasts, very popular among Catholic people, will take place over a weekend and so parish communities are able to celebrate their Sunday Eucharist in the context of these Feasts.

It is the same weekend that the launch of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan is to take place in all the parishes. A great deal of work has gone into the preparation of our Diocesan Pastoral Plan which has as its title "To be His Hands and Voice". We are very indebted to the groups headed by Sr Sonia Wagner SGS, Bishops Assistant for Pastoral Ministry who have guided the preparation of this process. Videos, transcripts, special Prayers of Intercession, a Litany of the Saints of our diocese, and a booklet on the Saints of our diocese have been prepared, all to help our diocese embrace our Pastoral Plan.

Regional Councils have been involved in the preparation of this Pastoral Plan, as has the Council of Priests, and the Assembly of Clergy

In some ways the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls are two sides to the one coin, and one side indicates the glory to which we are called, the company of the Saints with Christ risen. The second Feast reminds us that discipleship can cost, that our hearts can become hardened, that sometimes charity can die on our lips. God created us out of love, and the destiny of all of us is to return to the Father. Just as we must support each other on earth as disciples of Christ so we continue that prayer and support for all the souls who have gone ahead of us, that they may attain the fullness of life that Christ came to bring.

Those of our parishes with cemeteries take the opportunity of this Feast to bless the graves of those who have gone before us, an ancient and loved practice in the Church. Just like the blessing of the body with holy water and incense at the

Requiem, these blessings at the cemetery are tender acts of love and affection, reminding us of where we have come from and to where we are going.

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan strives to build on the strength of regional community that we have in our diocese. Consisting of regions like the farming Mid-North and the Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast, the sheep and cattle stations of the north and the Outback, fishing and tourist locales, industrial towns and mining towns, the fruit and vine growers of the Riverland, and the settlements of Uluru and the APY Lands, we are a diocese of communities scattered over large distances. Our Regional Councils are set up to remind us all that everyone is precious, no matter how remote or how small our community is. We are to be Christ's hands and voice to each other, and to all our neighbours.

May the launch of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan on such auspicious Feasts of All Saints and All Souls, reminding us that we are all would-be saints but still sinners in need of God's "cascade of mercy" as Pope Francis says, be a time of great grace and many blessings for all of us as Church. I urge your commitment to our Diocesan Plan, formulated after such lengthy involvement.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ Gregory O'Kelly SJ', written in a cursive style.

+ Gregory O'Kelly SJ
Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie

29th October 2014