

there must be
more to **life...**



*Discover
Jesus.*

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am delighted to write to you all concerning our Diocesan Theme for next year. As you know, a small group under the leadership of Fr Peter Carlsson has been working very hard on this programme and some of the fruits of their labour is included in this communication.

With the Feast of Christ the King, we approach the end of our year discovering how to “ignite” the expression of our faith. In many respects this past theme and focus has been internally on us as believers and followers of Jesus. And of course, the impetus of the year doesn’t come to an end. Ultimately, though, we need points of engagement with a world around us for whom Jesus often means very little apart from an expletive!

Our new theme for the Year of Mark’s Gospel – **There must be more to life... Discover Jesus!** seeks to move our focus outwards. Throughout the year the lectionary presents us with the questions posed by Mark’s Gospel – namely, “who is Jesus?” and “what is being a disciple going to demand of us?” At the same time, there are questions for many in the communities in which we live, often unasked, but below the surface, to do with “what is life all about?” Is life just about being born, getting a job, having a home and children, and then getting old and dying? For some people, their attempt to discover meaning may even involve falling prey to addictions and obsessions harmful to themselves as well as others.

The phrase **There must be more to life... Discover Jesus!** poses these questions for us all. As we launch our new theme for this coming church year, how will your church community become a point of engagement which presents the challenges and opportunities involved in “discovering Jesus” and how will we support and equip each other to invite our friends, neighbours and acquaintances to go beneath the surface of their lives to consider the eternal values summed up in the life of Jesus? We must have the confidence and commitment to talk to others about our faith in this coming year. Please pray regularly that we may notice opportunities for witness when they present themselves and for the wisdom and grace to respond appropriately.



The group have been working together to collate resources to have available electronically for use across the Diocese at Christ the King services and also throughout the coming year. These include;

- Suitable Propers for Christ the King
- Non-Eucharistic Liturgy (for places where there is no Eucharist on Christ the King)
- Hymn and Song suggestions for the year
- Children's Address – Christ the King for the Young at Heart
- Prayers of the Faithful
- The "Discover Jesus" artwork

Each centre will be supplied with a poster and cards featuring the Diocesan Prayer. These will start to be distributed by members of the Diocesan Council following their meeting this weekend. Before Christmas we aim to provide internal and external banners to assist with the promotion of this theme to the wider community.

The working group have chosen a focus for each month of next year to illustrate the overall theme. These topics are loosely based on the lectionary readings for the month and are listed in one of the attachments. Hopefully they can become a point of reference for us all as we rediscover who Jesus is and through a renewed encounter with him we pray that he can inspire us to testify to his love in our encounters with others day by day. One example might be the Easter theme; "Jesus reveals new life." Obviously this speaks of the resurrection life, but what does or can that mean? Is it just "I will go to heaven when I die" or is there a greater depth of meaning to be shared?

The task group will seek to continue to point to other resources which might be helpful over the coming months. Ultimately, each community of faith, with its leadership, will need to discern how the year's theme, and the topic for each month, can be used to promote engagement with and in our communities. Be daring and don't be afraid!

I am really grateful to members of the group for all their hard work and for the challenge that we might discover Jesus afresh and, by doing so, realise our obligation to share his love and life with others.

With continued prayers and every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Ford', with a small cross symbol above the first letter 'J'.

The Right Reverend John Ford
Bishop of The Murray