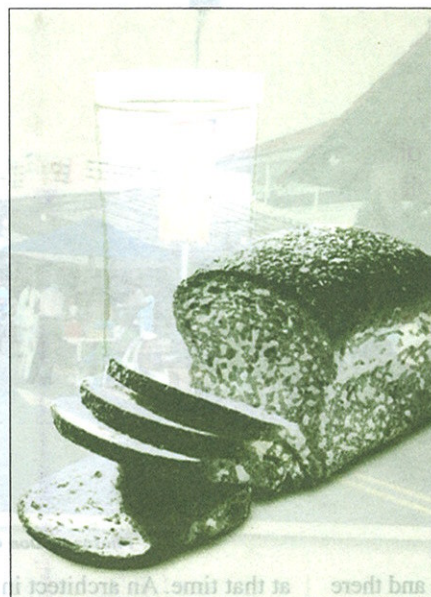




OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL & COMMUNITY COUNCIL



These pictures show the marks of Lent for Catholics: Pray, fast, and give alms

GIVE Make a difference

THE theme of Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten 2008 message is almsgiving. Archbishop Nicholas Chia similarly echoes the plight of the poor and needy in his Lenten message to parishioners.

Lent is a good time to reflect on where we stand in our faith as Christians. The sacrificial love of Jesus in giving Himself up entirely for us is a reminder that in our own way, we are also called to serve our brothers and sisters in need. Almsgiving helps us grow in our Christian charity. It makes a difference in the lives of others and our own.

Traditionally the Church conducts an annual fundraising campaign during Lent to encourage the spirit of almsgiving amongst Catholics. This year's Charities Week began on February 16 2008.

The fundraising campaign is led by the Catholic Social and Community Council (CSCC), the Archdiocesan arm for social and community outreach. CSCC seeks to raise a common fund for these

and other charity groups so that its individual member organisations can focus their efforts and resources on their core mission and beneficiaries.

As Matthew Tay, chairman of the pro tem executive committee of the Roman Catholic Prison Ministry (RCPM) describes it: "RCPM depends primarily on CSCC for funding and also some private donors and parish organisations. Being a Catholic Archdiocesan ministry and a non-profit organisation, we do not actively solicit contributions, donations or raise funds on our own. With scarce resources, we prefer to focus our efforts to ministering to the inmates and provide aftercare support when they are released."

Lenten donations will be used to support the work of CSCC and its member organizations. CSCC has 15 affiliates, reaching out to more than 40,000 beneficiaries of all races, languages and religions. Apart from the prison ministry, Lenten donations will benefit organisations such as Catholic Welfare Services, Family Life Society, Marine Parade Family Service Centre, Morning Star Community Services and Catholic AIDS Response Effort.

These organisations provide many programmes and services to help the disadvantaged in our community. These include learning support for children who face difficulties in their studies, elderly homes, family life enhancement workshops to build family bonding, homes for the destitute, providing support and care to those stigmatised by society such as prisoners and people with HIV/AIDS, and many others.

Your generous donations during Charities Week 2008 will reinforce the outreach efforts of these organisations to expand their services and develop new programmes and services to cater to the growing social needs of our society.



Please give generously.

Pick up a Charities Week appeal envelope from your parish and please return it.

Alternatively, write a cheque to "Catholic Social and Community Council" and mail it to 55 Waterloo Street #09-03, Singapore 187954.

Please provide your NRIC number if you require a tax exempt receipt.

For more information, visit www.cscs-singapore.org.

Pope: Help others, free yourself

Excerpts of Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten 2008 message:

"YOU cannot serve God and mammon" (Lk 16:13). Almsgiving helps us to overcome this constant temptation, teaching us to respond to our neighbour's needs and to share with others whatever we possess through divine goodness.

According to the teaching of the Gospel, we are not owners but rather administrators of the goods we possess....the Lord calls each one of us to act as a steward of his providence for our neighbour.

God offers to us sinners the possibility of being forgiven. The fact of sharing with the poor what we possess disposes us to receive such a gift...By drawing close to others through almsgiving, we



Pope Benedict XVI

draw close to God; it can become an instrument for authentic conversion and reconciliation with him and our brothers.

Lent invites us to 'train ourselves' spiritually, also through the practice of almsgiving, in order to grow in charity and recognise in the poor Christ Himself."

Archbishop: Focus on charity, draw closer to God

Excerpts of Archbishop Nicholas Chia's Lenten 2008 message:

"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.

I encourage you to give generously to help and support the good works of our Catholic charities. You may also wish to give beyond



Archbishop Nicholas Chia

your financial resources to include your time and talent.

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."