

# Words of Challenge, Words of Life

*The Bishops of St Albans, Bedford and Hertford*

*'I'm giving up chocolate this Lent – I need to lose a bit of weight anyway.'*

Many people think that Lent is about simply giving things up, as though God delights in making our lives more difficult. The true focus of Lent is actually about making more space for God in our lives. We give things up to get rid of the clutter that gets in God's way, so that He can inhabit us more fully.

Lent is about hearing afresh God's life-giving words to us. It's about renewing our discipleship of Jesus Christ, which is why we are inviting Christians this Lent to engage in three things.

**First**, to join a Lent group and reflect with others on the gospel readings which are set for each Sunday. We have written a course which we hope will both inspire and encourage you in your faith.

Dates for groups run by All Saints are on page 3. If you would like to meet at a different time please speak to Jo – there are groups being run by the other churches that may suit better. The course website is at: [www.stalbans.anglican.org/Mission/Lent-Course-2010](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/Mission/Lent-Course-2010). For those who would like a bible commentary to give extra background material, we are recommending Wansbrough's *Luke: The People's Bible Commentary* published by BRF (£7.99).

**Second**, you may like to participate in Challenge, which complements the Lent Course. We are asking as many people as possible to join us during Lent in daring to make a difference by living the words of Jesus. The idea is to learn some of the words of Jesus Christ by heart each day and then pray that God will give us the chance to put them into action.

### **Read it, learn it, pray it, do it!**

The short daily passages, all taken from the Gospel of Luke, will be downloadable from the internet. Alternatively you can opt to re-

ceive them by text message, email, Twitter or RSS. You can register on the Challenge website at [www.challenge2010.org](http://www.challenge2010.org)

We hope that this challenge will be taken up by people in the churches, as well as seekers and enquirers who would like to explore the words of Jesus Christ.

The Challenge website gives further details and ideas about how to make the Challenge a shared exercise within your congregation or among your friends. In particular you are able to write comments on the website and upload short video clips, via YouTube, so that you can share with others what the passage means to you and how you have lived it out that day.

**Third**, you are invited to come and join the Easter Monday Pilgrimage on 5th April at the Cathedral in St Albans. This year we are delighted that the community choir from South Oxhey (as featured on the television programme *The Choir*, led by Gareth Malone) will be with us. You can come by yourself, or with a group.

We are inviting all the Lent Groups and those who have done the Challenge to be involved in the Pilgrimage and to make it a way to celebrate and to bring to God all that has been learned, all that has been done and pledges of future action.

This will be a wonderful way to express our individual and our corporate commitment to our risen Lord and Saviour, in whose resurrection life we dare to make a difference in our communities and in the world. Details of the day may be found at [www.stalbans.anglican.org/Mission/Easter-Monday-Pilgrimage](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/Mission/Easter-Monday-Pilgrimage), and on the Challenge website at [www.challenge2010.org](http://www.challenge2010.org)

+ Alan St Albans + Richard Bedford + Christopher Hertford