

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRUST AGAIN THIS LENT

The Diocese of Wollongong have published their annual Lenten Program resource for 2019—*Trust*. The popularity of Wollongong’s programs throughout Australia (and increasingly in New Zealand, Ireland and the USA) have skyrocketed over the past five years, especially with the introduction last year of individual daily reflections in addition to the traditional Sunday Gospel reflections for Lenten groups.

The coordinator of the program for the Diocese of Wollongong, Mr Daniel Hopper, said: “It started off as a little diocesan project to provide faith formation for our parishioners who like to journey through Lent together by studying the Gospels and enjoying some time of fellowship.

“We then began to publish little pocket-size daily reflection books for the Advent and Christmas seasons. They flew off the shelves and soon we were distributing up to 30,000 copies a year!

“It wasn’t long before we were being inundated by people, who cannot attend Lenten groups, asking whether we could also publish daily reflections during Lent. So, we decided to combine the two and produce one book that includes short daily reflections (from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday) in addition to the longer-form Sunday Gospel reflections, spiritual direction, Gospel readings, responsorial psalms, prayers and reflection questions that are traditionally part of the Lenten program for groups.”

Daniel continued, “Although we sell to hundreds of parishes and many schools and communities throughout Australia, I am most proud that our programs are read by thousands of prison inmates in Australia who receive the program as a gift from their prison chaplain as part of an outreach program we have created. We receive a lot of letters from inmates who have read our programs and want to let us know just how much it helps them find God and how much they need God in their lives. I love getting those letters!”

This year’s Lenten program, *Trust*, is a 76-page full-colour book with bulk pricing starting from only \$5.00 per copy (for GST Free Catholic Religious Groups). Fr Sean Cullen (parish priest at St Thomas Aquinas Parish in Bowral and St Michael’s Parish in Mittagong) and Sr Hilda Scott OSB (novice mistress and vocations director at the Benedictine Abbey, Jamberoo) provide the Sunday Gospel reflections and spiritual direction. The shorter daily reflections have been written by 14 fantastic clergy, religious and lay contributors from the Diocese of Wollongong and around the world.

Trust also features stunning religious artworks from the Masters such Rembrandt, Rivière, Rubens, Fetti, Batoni and Ciseri which Monsignor Graham Schmitzer expertly breaks-open as part of his popular artwork spotlights.

Trust is accompanied by a Triple CD Resource that includes six beautiful responsorial psalms recorded especially for the program—written by acclaimed Catholic composer, Paul Mason, and arranged and performed by one of Australia’s leading session musicians, Seth Harsh, and sung by the talented Michaela Rose and Fiesta Mataele. The Triple CD resource also includes audio narrations of the Gospel readings by Bishop Brian Mascord and Jude Hennessy and audio narrations of the Sunday Gospel reflections narrated by Fr Sean and spiritual direction by Sr Hilda.

When asked about the name of this year’s program, Daniel said, “I love one-word titles. I was speaking to Fr Sean about the themes that were appearing in the Gospel reflections he was preparing. The first word he said was ‘trust’, and I thought, ‘I cannot think of a more appropriate word that we need to hear from God during this time.’ The Holy Spirit has a way of doing that when we prepare our programs.”

You can download a sample of the book and music and purchase online at www.dowshop.org.au.

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