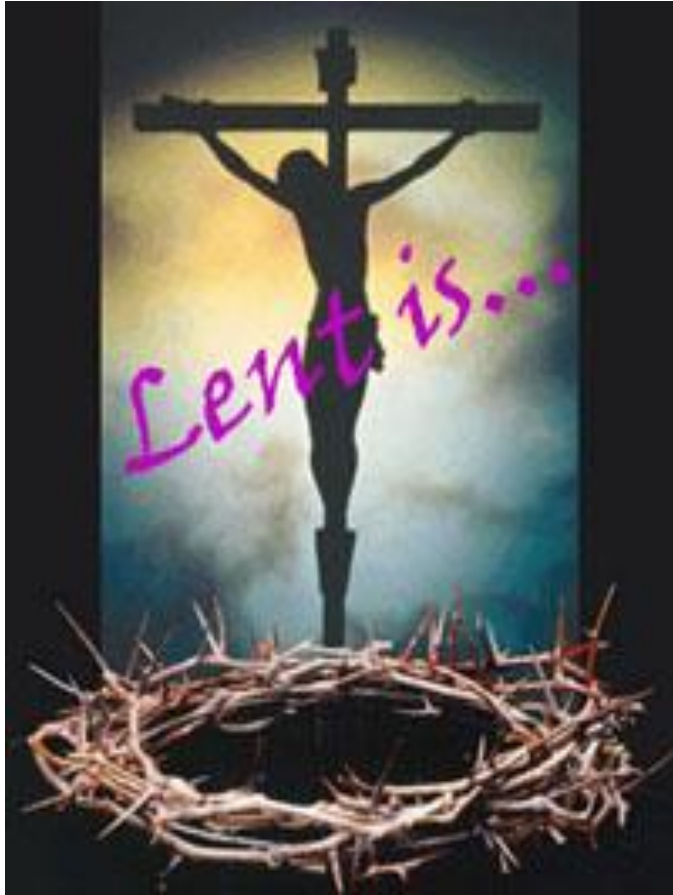


# ABM Speakers' Corner



Issue One, March 2015



ABM acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land; and the Elders both past and present, who have contributed to the life journey of all.

## Speakers' Prayer

Almighty God, as we engage with our ABM family and friends around Australia, may the gifts that you have taught us give us the confidence to spread your word and bring our work into the hearts of all Australians. Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen

## A WARM WELCOME

A very warm welcome to your first edition of Speakers' Corner for 2015. Your feedback is always most welcome.

Thank you for your hard work, tireless efforts and support of ABM - we really can't do it without you.

Yours in Christ.

*Michael Robinson*

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## Prayers for Lent

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.  
Psalm 139:23, 24

Loving Lord! Thank You for bringing me into these days of introspection. I take this time to analyse my ways and meditate upon the ultimate sacrifices You have made for me, a grant sinner.

Lord! There were times when I had been so mean to others and when I had lost my patience and integrity. There were times when I had lost faith in You when I had been unfaithful to You without even acknowledging Your sacrificial love for me. Please forgive me for all the sins I have committed against You as well as my fellow-men.

Let me regain the spiritual values I have lost and restore in me the original first love for You. I rededicate myself at Your feet Lord! Search me and fill me with Your divine presence so that my life can reflect the Gospel. Let this Lenten season be a time of restoration and the means for renewed direction and perspective. Please guide me and make me a channel of blessing to others. Thank You for helping me to reflect Your love and sacrifice. In Jesus' name, I pray.  
Amen.

Father of light, in you is found no shadow of change but only the fullness of life and limitless truth. Open our hearts to the voice of your Word and free us from the original darkness that shadows our vision. Restore our sight that we may look upon your Son who calls us to repentance and a change of heart, for He lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.  
Amen.

God of times and seasons, you have brought us again to Lent for the study of Your Word, for the remembrance of the temptation of Your Son, and for the contemplation of His Cross. The birds know their seasons; forbid that we be blind to our times. Grant us a Lenten blessing, and may no one miss this time of growth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



## What Happened on the Cross

by John Damascene (c. 675-749)



By nothing else except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has death been brought low:

The sin of our first parent destroyed,  
hell plundered,  
resurrection bestowed,  
the power given us to despise the things of this world,  
even death itself,  
the road back to the former blessedness made smooth,  
the gates of paradise opened,  
our nature seated at the right hand of God,  
and we made children and heirs of God.

By the cross all these things have been set aright...

It is a seal that the destroyer may not strike us,  
a raising up of those who lie fallen,  
a support for those who stand,  
a staff for the infirm,  
a crook for the shepherded,  
a guide for the wandering,  
a perfecting of the advanced,  
salvation for soul and body,  
a deflector of all evils,  
a cause of all goods,  
a destruction of sin,  
a plant of resurrection,  
and a tree of eternal life.





## History of Lent

Lent is the time of fasting and abstinence concluding to the banquet of Easter, bringing to mind Jesus' 40-day fast in the rough countries. Catholic Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and ends earlier than the twilight of Masses of Holy Thursday.

### Origin and Development of Lent over the Time

The word Lent originates from a Germanic root meaning Spring but is more frequently connected with the 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Saturday. It was initiated in the Babylonian pagan religious conviction, but was looped into Christianity when the Roman Empire accepted Christianity as its authorized religion.

Here's how it started. According to ritual Semeramis, the wife of Nimrod the King of Babylon, asserted she had been supernaturally impregnated by the Sun god and gave birth to Tammuz. Someday while hunting Tamuz was slaughtered by a wild boar. Semeramis lamented for 40 days, at the conclusion of which Tammuz was apparently transported back from the dead. She stated publicly herself as Queen of Heaven, established a priesthood to worship her son and stated its head priest flawless, and memorialized her grief in a yearly 40 day period of defiance. It was the world's foremost imitation of the Biblical story of the Redeemer and developed into a mother-child sect that was copied in more or less every pagan legend.

Like all Christian holy days and holidays, it has altered over the years, but its reason has for all time been the identical: self-examination and remorse, verified by self-abstinence, in preparation for Easter. Early church father Irenaeus of Lyons noted down such a phase in the initial days of the church, but back then it survived just two or three days, not the 40 observed these days. Until the 600s, Lent started on Quadragesima (Fortieth) Sunday, but Gregory the Great shifted it to a Wednesday, now identified as Ash Wednesday, to have the accurate figure of 40 days in Lent—not including Sundays, which were actually buffet days. Gregory, who is regarded as the minister of the medieval papacy, is also accredited with the ritual that provides the day its forename. As Christians approach to the church for clemency, Gregory manifested their foreheads with ashes bringing in their mind the biblical sign of regret (sackcloth and ashes) and death.

By the 800s, some Lenten activities were turning out to be more comfortable. First, Christians were permitted to eat after 3 p.m. By the 1400s, it was noon. Ultimately, a variety of foods (like fish) were acceptable, and in 1966 the Roman Catholic church only limited fast days to Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It must be observed, though, that observance in Eastern Orthodox churches are still pretty stringent.

### Lenten Candles - The Color and the Significance

Lent candles have their own significance in the observance of Lent. The burning candles stands for the arrival of Christ as the illumination of the world. The shades of the candles can differ. Conventionally, three purple candles and one rose-coloured or pink candle are used. The purple indicates that Lent is a period of regret as well as hope. Many churches use blue candles instead of purple ones to highlight the positive hope of the period. A candle is lit on the first Sunday of Lent with an additional one lit on every following Sunday. The blissfully coloured pink candle is set aside for the third Sunday of Lent, Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete, which actually refers to "rejoice" in Latin, is the initial word of the Introit for that Sunday:

Several Christians append an exact explanation to the four candles. The first candle, or the Prophet Candle, stands for the optimism and expectation of Christ's incarnation as forecasted at so many places in the Old Testament. The second candle recalls how Christ was born in modest style, in the trivial village of Bethlehem. Therefore this candle is often referred to as the Bethlehem Candle. The third candle is identified as the Shepherds' Candle. It brings to mind the joy of the shepherds when they left after having seen the Christ-child in the stable. The fourth candle is the Angels' Candle. It take us back to the blissful crowd that declared the good news of our Saviour's birth.

### Lent Customs and Traditions

There are conventionally forty days in Lent which are highlighted by fasting, together from foods and revelry, and by other actions of abstinence. The three conventional rituals to be taken up with new strength for the period of Lent are prayer (honesty in the direction of God), fasting (honesty in the direction of self), and almsgiving (honesty in the direction of fellow citizen).

A lot of contemporary Protestants believe the commemoration of Lent to be a option, instead of a compulsion. They can make a decision to give up a preferred food or drink (e.g. chocolate, alcohol) or doings (e.g., watching cinema, playing games, etc.) for Lent, or they may as an alternative engage in a Lenten restraint for example working for a NGO. Roman Catholics can as well celebrate Lent in this approach adding to the food limits mentioned above, although this is no more obligatory connecting to the risk of mortal sin.



## GUIDELINES FOR SPEAKERS

### **Preliminaries**

To be an effective speaker one needs to be enthusiastic about the Mission of the Church through ABM, eager to inspire others to support this Mission and well-informed about the policies and strategies of the organisation. Much information regarding current programs can be gleaned from the Project Book, from the latest edition of Partners and also from the website.

It is important to clarify beforehand the nature and size of your audience, where you are to speak from, the technical equipment available - especially if you intend to show a film or DVD - and who will introduce you. If you are to speak to a congregation in a Parish you need to know if you are to speak within a service (are you to provide the sermon for that day?) or at the end of a Worship time or even at the morning tea or lunch that follows it. Are you expected to link your material to the Gospel of the day in any real sense? Ask questions before the occasion as to the expectations of your audience. Find out if the Parish or group gives to AMB and to what extent and if they support a specific project.

### **AIMS.**

1. To increase the congregation/groups/school's knowledge of the work of ABM and its role in furthering the Mission of the Church.
2. To thank the Parish for their support of ABM - if appropriate
3. To inspire the Parish to increase their support of ABM.

### **APPROACH**

1. Through showing a short film made by ABM, no longer than 10 - 12 minutes. Briefly introduce the topic and setting of the film/DVD beforehand. (Check on arrival that equipment is functioning and that all will be able to see the film clearly). Speak then about importance of that partnership and how ABM supports the local people in their work.
2. A Second approach. To plunge straight into talking about ABM - this approach will work especially if you are a confident and experienced speaker and have a special interest or knowledge of some aspects of ABM's relationship with a specific partner Church. Use Project Book as introduction perhaps focus on a particular country.

### **IMPORTANT POINTS TO EMPHASISE.**

- a. Partnership is with the local church - Missionaries are no longer sent. ABM partners with Anglican Church in 13 countries overseas - Pacific Asia and Africa - and with Diocese in Australia to support work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.
- b. ABM's approach is holistic -- seeking to provide for the spiritual, social and material needs of the people in accord with Jesus Ministry.
- c. Thus ABM works in 2 distinct but not separate ways, with its partner Churches.
  - i. Assists them (the local leaders) to strengthen their capacity to evangelise and minister within their communities through theological education, capacity building and leadership training. (Church to Church Program).
  - ii. Assists partner Churches as they care for the heads of their own communities through health and education services, water and agriculture programs, literacy programs, base building programs and emergency relief in times of natural disaster. (Development Program)
- d. Relate to Five Marks of Mission. (These could be on screen or large posters) ABM's programs specifically target poorer areas and supports initiatives which address discrimination, the effects of climate change and gender inequality.
- e. Encounter Program. This allows Clergy and lay leaders from partner countries to spend time in Australia (usually about 3 months) gaining ministry experience and expertise in their area of work alongside a mentor. ABM also brings key people from our partners to Australia to meet the Board and Staff and to share stories of their life in ministry in supporting parishes.

Written by: Reverend Phillippa Weatherall Melbourne

## FEEDBACK FROM SPEAKER

I spoke at ST Mary Magdalene's, Adelaide, on the 15th February. The Gospel that day was the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop, so I chose subjects that involved mountains - TOPIK and the Peace Mountain, in the Philippines the organic mushroom project, a brief mention of Kerina College and literacy training in the Highlands of PNG and then in Kenya the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd programme and briefly, getting away from mountainous areas, Machakos and Makueni. I made a poster board with enlargements of three photos Vivienne sent me.

Hard to assess how it went - that will show in the giving and commitment from that parish, I guess. A couple of people said they appreciated the stories I told. Several said it was an interesting talk.

Most of the discussion afterwards centred on the usual sort of thing" my wife grew up in PNG", "I knew your father-in-law" etc

I am always searching for some "inside" information, stories, impressions - hence my plaguing the staff from time to time. I have been asked to speak again next week - on Aboriginal projects this time, so will be in touch with Malcolm.

Anne Chittleborough, Adelaide



### Contact us at ABM

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### List of Resources

#### For Education and Publicity

- Prayer Diary
- Project Book
- Partners' Magazine
- Annual Report
- ABM DVDs
- Partner Brochures
- Magnets
- Posters (Marks of Mission, Country overview)
- Banners

#### For Funding

- Duplex (Giving envelopes)
- Purses
- Lanyards
- Bequest Forms
- Crosses