



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Being a Christian today means listening to God's Word and doing his work as we practice and live our faith. Part and parcel of that, especially during this season of Lent, means living with the reality of day to day sacrifice. All that we undertake for Lent helps us to be better "ambassadors for Christ" and more effective signs of "the goodness of God"; our Lenten observance helps us to focus our priorities on the Lord and towards each other.

Living and giving for others is a predominant feature of Christian stewardship and it has been particularly prominent up and down the length and breadth of the diocese in the *Living Our Faith* campaign. This initiative has touched all our communities from Maidenhead to the Isle of Wight, from Bournemouth to Liphook and from the outskirts of Oxford and Wantage to Jersey.

There have been amazingly – and humbling – acts of generous and sacrificial giving from over 3000 families, all of whom have been eager and willing to play their part in building and sustaining the life and future of our diocese. They have readily given new money for the new work that faces us.

Last month in Rome, I was able to share something of all this when I spoke with the Holy Father about the Pastoral Plan and the way in which you were all playing such a major part in its implementation. He raised an eyebrow of delighted surprise when I told him of how generously you had all supported *Living Our Faith* to the tune of nearly £8 million.

We were able to celebrate success so far in a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Cathedral in January. Now that a further 37 parishes are taking up the challenge of the campaign, I look forward to similar celebrations around the diocese in the coming months.

I will invite you all to join me in those celebrations but for now, please join me in prayer for the continuing success of *Living Our Faith* as we seek to complete the campaign throughout the diocese.

With blessings and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Lipman'.

Bishop of Portsmouth

8th March 2010