

BISHOP'S MESSAGE FOR FEBRUARY 2008

Dear Friends in Christ,

“Stay with me. Remain here with me. Watch and pray”. This is the simple request our Lord Jesus makes of his disciples that night he wrestles with the Father’s will while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. His was a request for caring company, for the ministry of presence, for the conversation and consolation of his friends. Despite themselves and regardless of their best intentions, the disciples fail Jesus yet again. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

What is it that this season of Lent requires of us? It asks us the ancient question: Will we stay, and watch, and wait with Jesus as he completes his sojourn to secure our salvation? Or will the weight of our daily distractions simply overwhelm us to the point that we fail Jesus in precisely the way his first disciples did – “asleep” to his grief and passion in our behalf?

If we fail in our accompaniment of Jesus, he does not fail in faithfully accompanying us day by day. Our Lord – who experienced the radical aloneness of the Calvary Cross and knows that experience to depths of his being – promises us: “I will never leave you nor forsake you”... “remember, I am with you always, to the close of the age”. May your Lenten journey awaken you to the Christ to be seen, served, and accompanied in the people you meet as you make your pilgrimage through these Forty Days.

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop
Synod of Alberta and the Territories