



PASTORAL LETTER FOR LENT 2025
**“Greater Concern for Our Brothers and Sisters
Who Are Weak and Poor”**

*(Delivered as a substitute for the homily
at the Celebration of the Eucharist
on Saturday/Sunday, 1–2 March 2025)*

Dear Mothers and Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, Friars, Young People, Teenagers, and Beloved Children in Christ,

1. On Ash Wednesday, 5 March, we will enter the Lent season—a time set aside especially for self-renewal, marked by an ever-deepening love, care, and witness. Today's proclaimed Word of the Lord can serve as an inspiration for that renewal. In his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul reminds us that Jesus Christ has triumphed over the power of sin. Based on that faith, we are encouraged to stand firm, not waver, and to be diligent in the work of the Lord, for in fellowship with Him our labor is never in vain (cf. 1 Cor 15:58). Furthermore, through the Gospel of Luke (Lk 6:39–45), Jesus reminds us of the importance of self-examination and of refraining from easily spotting the faults of others. We are also advised to remain aware of our own weaknesses (verse 39) and to carefully examine whether we are capable of producing good fruit that others can experience (verse 44). Good deeds naturally flow from a good heart (verse 45).

2. The exhortation of the Apostle Paul strengthens our resolve to become Pilgrims of Hope in response to the Jubilee Year Celebration of 2025. Concerning hope, Pope Francis writes, “Hope is born of love and is based on the love that radiates from the heart of Jesus, pierced on the cross” (*Spes Non Confundit*, no. 3). Earlier, the Pope stated, “Everyone knows what it means to hope. In the heart of every person, hope dwells as a desire and longing for the good things to come, even though we do not know what the future holds. Yet, uncertainty about the future can sometimes evoke conflicting feelings... Often we encounter people who are desperate, pessimistic, and cynical about the future, as if nothing could ever bring them happiness...” (*Spes Non Confundit*, no. 1). Such inner turmoil is often experienced by our brothers and sisters who are weak and poor. This is because they are marginalized, deprived, or even

entirely without access to the resources needed to meet the basic needs inherent to a life of dignity.

3. Together with our brothers and sisters who are weak and poor, we desire to walk as pilgrims of hope. As Pope Francis states, hope is founded on the faith that God, who began a good work, will bring it to completion (cf. Phil 1:6; Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Wis 21:1, 10, 11). **True hope** will yield a **genuine concern** that, in turn, manifests in various **creative movements**—a sign that hope is not in vain (cf. *Spes Non Confundit, nos.* 7–15).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

4. The Jubilee Year Celebration of 2025 also reaffirms our commitment to realizing the Basic Direction (ARDAS) of the Archdiocese of Jakarta for 2025, namely, “Greater Concern for Our Brothers and Sisters Who Are Weak and Poor.” Who are these brothers and sisters? Why must we have a greater concern? In the New Testament era, the poorest and most vulnerable were those who had lost everything—their economic means as well as family and social support. They were often homeless, regarded as strangers without access to aid from family or community. They were forced to beg because they possessed no resources at all—no land, no family members to assist them. Today, the poor are understood as individuals or groups lacking financial resources, social support, and other essential necessities to meet the basic standards of living with dignity. The prevalence of poverty around us—as reported by the National Statistics Agency (BPS)—is a collective concern. We are grateful that, according to the same agency, poverty rates are tending to decline. Yet, unfortunately, this decrease in poverty is accompanied by a rise in social inequality. The indicators of income distribution inequality have actually increased in both the Special Capital Region of Jakarta and West Java—areas that include Tangerang and Bekasi within the Archdiocese of Jakarta.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

5.1. The Holy Scriptures recount many stories of Jesus who saw, listened, touched, felt, and was moved with compassion when encountering those who were ill, marginalized, suffering, and sinful. In the story “Jesus

Feeding the Five Thousand” (Mark 6:31–44), the Lord was moved by compassion when He saw the multitude following Him who were hungry. Jesus charged His disciples with the responsibility to feed them, saying, “You must feed them!” (Mark 6:37). Even though they faced limitations, Jesus called on His disciples to have the courage to decide and to engage in feeding the hungry. When there is the will and courage to act, Jesus overcomes the disciples’ limitations (Mark 6:37–38).

5.2. In the parable of the “Final Judgment” (Matthew 25:31–40), the King will place the sheep on His right and they will receive the Kingdom because, during their lifetime, they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, provided shelter to strangers, visited the sick, and cared for the imprisoned (Matthew 25:34–36). The Lord identifies Himself with these humble individuals (Matthew 25:40)—with those who are hungry, naked, strangers, sick, and imprisoned. “Truly, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these My brothers and sisters, you did for Me” (Matthew 25:40).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

6. In the upcoming Aksi Puasa Pembangunan (APP) 2025 activities, we should move toward formulating plans and movements in the form of transformative and sustainable concrete actions—an authentic expression of our care to empower our brothers and sisters who are weak and poor. We hope to find ways to address the root causes of their plight: why they have become weak and poor. Our hope is that our collective actions will transform their lives for the better.

7. I trust that the spirit of the Jubilee Year and the ARDAS of the Archdiocese of Jakarta for 2025 will truly inspire the concrete actions of our APP this year. Genuine, empowerment-oriented actions are usually more capable of bringing about change. Initiatives planned by the Pastoral Council—such as the Food Security Movement, efforts to improve children’s nutritional intake against stunting, and the encouragement of Small Enterprises—can serve as concrete means to strengthen and empower our brothers and sisters. Meanwhile, charitable assistance must continue to be pursued, especially for those among our community who belong to the ultra-micro group—the very poorest of the poor.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

8. On this occasion, I wish to sincerely express my gratitude for the many good initiatives that have been and are being undertaken by the people of the Archdiocese of Jakarta in the effort to create shared prosperity. Individuals, communities, groups, and organizations have cooperated to nurture and develop these efforts. May our journey together as pilgrims of hope never tire us from seeking new ways that serve as signs of hope.

9. Finally, together with the priests, deacons, and all ministers of the people, I wish to express my thanks to all the Mothers/Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, Friars, Young People, Teenagers, and Children who, in various ways, are involved in the missionary work of the Archdiocese of Jakarta. We hope that through the various sincere actions we undertake, we may continue to contribute to the creation of shared prosperity—a tangible manifestation of salvation for our brothers and sisters who are poor, weak, and differently-abled. May the peace and blessings of God be with all of you, your families, and your communities.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a vertical stroke on the left, a horizontal stroke across the middle, and a stylized flourish on the right.

+ Cardinal Ignatius Suharyo
Archbishop of Jakarta

RULES FOR FASTING AND ABSTINENCE 2025 ARCHDIOCESE OF JAKARTA (KAJ)

The Lenten/Fasting period for 2025 begins on **Ash Wednesday**, 5 March 2025, and ends on **Saturday**, 19 April 2025.

“All Christians, in their own way, are obligated to repent for the sake of divine law” (Can. 1249). In this season of repentance, the Church invites its faithful to “specifically set aside time for prayer, liturgical services, and works of charity, to deny oneself by more faithfully fulfilling one’s obligations, and especially by fasting and abstaining” (ibid).

The pastoral focus for 2025 is “Greater Concern for Our Brothers and Sisters in Need.” Accordingly, all believers are called to extend special care to our weak and poor brethren in order to realize shared prosperity.

In the spirit of repentance and the renewal of our faith, the Church urges us all to observe the following guidelines during this Pre-Lenten season:

- **Fasting and Abstinence on Ash Wednesday, 5 March 2025, and on Good Friday, 18 April 2025.** On all other Fridays during the Lenten season, only abstinence is required.
- Under the new Church Law, all who are considered adults **up until the beginning of their 60th year** are required to fast (Can. 1252). An adult is defined as anyone who is **at least 18 years old** (Can. 97 §1).
- Definition of Fasting: **Fasting means consuming one full meal per day.**
- Abstinence Requirement: **All individuals aged 14 and above are obliged to observe abstinence** (Can. 1252).
- Definition of Abstinence: The term “abstinence” here refers to the personal or familial choice of forgoing certain foods or habits—for example, abstaining from meat, salt, snacks, or cigarettes.

In addition to the above, as a sign of charitable love—a tangible expression of repentance—each parish in the Archdiocese of Jakarta is requested to initiate the solidarity movement called **“Celengan Belarasa Anak” (CBA)** starting this Lenten season 2025. The collections from the CBA at each parish will be gathered through the KAJ Economic Office and allocated to papal charitable works.

Let us strive to ensure that the spirit of repentance and gratitude fills this season of abundant grace by embodying the attitude of “ever-deeper love, care, and witness.”

May our faith be strengthened during this Lenten journey. We trust that, through Him, our fellowship will grow closer, and our compassion for our suffering brethren will deepen. May God bless your families and communities.

Jakarta, 20 February 2025

- + Cardinal Ignatius Suharyo
- + Archbishop of Jakarta