

## Christ Church Freemantle

### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February – First Sunday of Lent

A young Lady who is well known to me once asked her Father at the dinner table – ‘Daddy, are you a Christian?’

After a thoughtful pause, the Daddy answered ‘Yes, I am Darling’. Dinner continued with the usual family dinner small talk; but if the Daddy thought he had put ‘that question’ to rest, he was mistaken: for the young Lady, as if there had been no break in her conversation with Daddy, continued .... *but Daddy, how do you know you are Christian?*

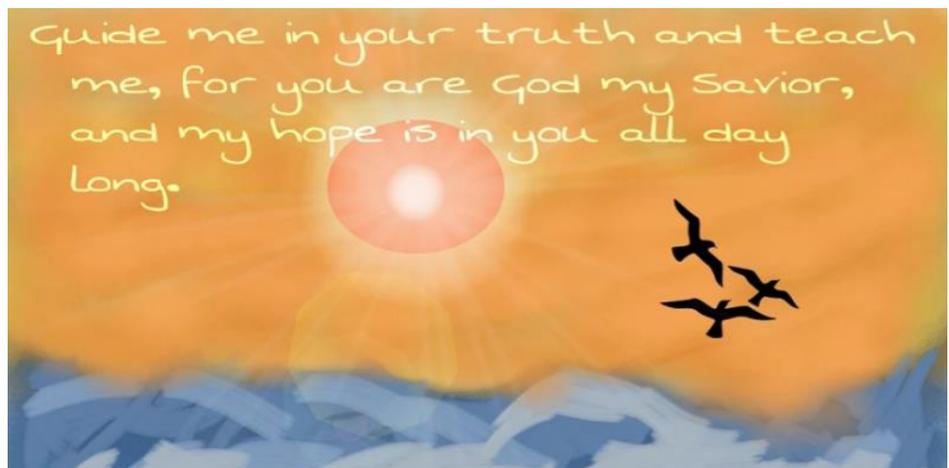
That is a question I have often asked myself, and which comes to me during this season of Lent. Perhaps as we reflect on the meaning of being Christians, we could turn as many of us fortunate to have access to the ‘web’ might do; is look up its meaning. There I read that a Christian is a person who is a believer in Christ and a follower of Christ. One who has changed their behaviours to best reflect Christ’s ways. Followers of Jesus Christ were first called ‘Christians’ in Antioch (*Acts Chp 11 v 26*).

During Lent, we as Christians - followers and believers in Christ, are minded to prepare our minds and hearts to celebrate Easter Sunday: Christ overcoming death. Christ made the ultimate sacrifice - death on the cross - because He cared for our redemption.

People prepare for Easter in different ways. For the duration of Lent some give up a favourite treat: chocolates, sugar in their coffee or tea; that extra glass of wine with dinner etc. As a young

girl my Convent boarding school took the view that rather than temporarily giving up a pleasure, we could take up a new behaviour: acts of kindness, helpfulness, consideration, generosity; as we went about our daily activities in the hope that they would lead to ‘changed’ behaviours as we honour and acknowledge others as ‘valued’ fellow God’s children.

Acts of love and friendship, however minor, make many of us feel ‘special’ and ‘cared for’ – they bring hope amidst the challenges, difficulties, and uncertainties of life – and *Oh how have the events of the past twelve months touched all areas of our lives!* The unknown consequences of the world-wide pandemic have the potential to overwhelm many of us, but as Christians, we can have hope and share it as we are able, that there will come a time when with the help of God, we will overcome.



The season of Lent can thus be the opportunity for us to give 'gifts' which show we 'care' as we prepare to celebrate the greatest gift of all – Jesus laid down His life for us. Through this act, and by His resurrection on the third day, Easter Sunday, we have the assurance of the constant love of Our God.

During this season of Lent, as we prepare in our own unique ways for the Easter celebrations, we could be minded to ponder on the question – *'how do I know I am a Christian?'*

ps I have yet to find out how the Daddy knew he was a Christian

*Esther Burke*