

# MODERATOR'S 2023 SEASON OF LENT MESSAGE



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## *Sorely Tested*

Jesus was sorely tested through 40 days of mounting pressure brought on by hunger, thirst, and demonic taunting. We too, in these last few years, have experienced the cumulative impact of one test after another. Add up the Global Financial Crisis, Christchurch earthquakes, mosque attack, COVID pandemic, housing crisis, war in Ukraine, impending recession, flooding and now Cyclone Gabrielle, and feel the toll it has taken on us.

How are you feeling this Lenten season?

All that has happened in recent years, and right now, leaves me feeling weary and wondering what will be next. It makes me feel sorely tested, in a nation that has been sorely tested. It causes me to wonder about where we put our trust and what will sustain us in this time of repeated trial.

Jesus was sustained by the leading and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit in his time of testing.

Jesus put his trust in scripture to anchor him at a time when it was easy to lose perspective. And then, when the rush of testing began to subside, there were angels who helped pick up the pieces! And haven't we seen our share of angels personified in the aftermath of the latest crisis, Cyclone Gabrielle.

I witnessed this phenomenon in Christchurch after the earthquakes and mosque attack. Lovely acts of 'random' kindness from complete strangers. And we see it again and again in the aftermath of this latest storm, these angels in disguise.

We find ourselves as churches incarnated in our communities, bearers of the Spirit, guided by the scriptures and with our fair share of angelic readiness for action. In this way we can take a leaf out of the Lenten story of Jesus, in a nation hungering for hope!

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