**Homily at Mass on Saturday March 28th 2020.**

At the outset of Lent I quoted from a sermon by Fr John O’Donnell:

**At the beginning of Lent as at every stage of life's journey we are tempted to present God with our programme for spiritual success, with our formulas for prayer, with our penances and renunciations. All of these lie within our control. But no true conversion seems ever to have taken place until that moment when someone weighed down with weaknesses beyond their control hears the words which Paul heard addressed to him: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor. 12:9).**

Our Lent this year is not the one we envisaged. The Covid pandemic has brought a very different experience. Yet the fundamental perspective of Lent still holds good. That perspective is given by repentance and conversion.

We can think of repentance as a change of mind-set, a new and truer way of seeing things. Jesus says: “The time has come, the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the Good News”. We are invited to see the world differently. The decisive intervention of God has occurred. Change your mind-set, see things for what they are. St Paul heard the words: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” This was a new perception of reality and led to a new way of living. Repentance leads to conversion. Lent offers us, if we are open to the possibility, the opportunity of repentance – of having our mind-set adjusted to let God be God in our lives. We could believe and act as if God’s grace is sufficient for us.

We can think of conversion is the way we act differently as a consequence of the grace of repentance. Conversion takes the form of changed behaviour. This is the challenge of Lent. What are we called to do differently? What am I called to stop doing? What should I start doing? Conversion then is the nitty-gritty; not just thought but action and change. Even if we fail to carry through on my good intentions, each of us is challenged to act differently and enter more whole-heartedly into our vocation.

“Lord, your grace is sufficient for us, for your power is made perfect in our weakness.”