

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is appropriate that we celebrate and observe the International Day of People with Disability as we prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in Advent. The Church has taken this day as an opportunity to encourage a truly pastoral view that embraces our total community as the living Body of Christ. The day is observed annually on 3rd December and coincides with the beginning of Advent.

The theme this year is 'Empowering people with disabilities and their families'. It focuses particularly on people with disability who live in poverty. People with disability are among the poorest in Australia and our world.

We are called and challenged to take action to ensure our communities are open and active in promoting opportunities that include people with disability. In particular we need to ensure that people with disability living in remote and rural areas, those who are new to our country and those struggling with the ever increasing daily expense of living are supported and encouraged in the most practical and appropriate manner. This timely theme is an invitation and call to us to create and ensure a change in societal attitude that sees disability as a burden to humanity and a costly experience to society.

I invite you to order and distribute the bookmark and use the material provided to promote and recognise the gifts and lives of people with disability.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Peter J. Elliott".

Most Rev Peter J Elliott
Bishops' Delegate for Disability Issues
Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

3 December 2009

