

SHROVE TUESDAY – 28 February. *Day before Lent.*

Sometimes known as ‘Pancake Tuesday’: traditionally a time for celebration and using up the eggs and fat in the house before the more sombre Lenten fast.

Gather friends together to make and eat pancakes. Talk together about changes you would like to make to who you are and how you live your life.

ASH WEDNESDAY – 1 March. *1st day of Lent.*

Traditionally a day for reflection on what needs to change if you are to more closely follow Christ. Ashes are a symbol of this desire to change.

Go to an Anglican or Catholic ashing service today, and experience having the ash cross marked on your forehead.

(We encourage you to record your thoughts and feelings in a notebook during Lent.)

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT – 5 March

Lent can be seen as a period of ‘confrontation with the false self’ (*Thomas Keating*) – the desires, motivations and values that drive our habitual emotional responses and behaviours.

‘Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense God’s grace.’ Jesus, Matthew 6:6 (The Bible)

Make the time to be alone with God as often as you can during Lent...being honest, and quiet. Notice the thoughts and feelings that come up, and hand them to God. Allow God to connect with the real you.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT – 12 March

In the wilderness, Jesus was tempted *‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.’* (Matthew 4, The Bible)

In what ways are you tempted to take short cuts? ...to avoid life’s hard places and long journeys with an instant solution?

Find a stone or brick. Write on it your struggles...the changes that seem to be taking a long time, the painful situations you want to end. Bring these to God in prayer, asking for the grace to see them through. Place the stone on the floor beside your bed to remind you of the journey you are on.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT – 19 March

*‘We eat not simply to satisfy our own appetites,
we eat to sustain ourselves in the task we have been given...
We eat to nourish the vehicle of giving;
we eat to sustain our task of earth repair,
our quest for harmony, peace, and justice.’*
(Rami Shapiro)

What is one thing you could do this Lent to simplify your life, to decrease resource consumption, or to lighten your impact on the earth? What do you need to enable you to fulfil this?

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT – 26 March

*‘Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right Spirit within me.’* (Psalm 51, The Bible)

What are the things that clutter your heart?...thoughts, worries, prejudices, criticisms, regrets...

Look into a mirror, and using a felt tip marker or soap, write or draw onto your reflection words and symbols that represent your ‘clutter’. When you are ready, spray glass cleaner onto the mirror and wipe it clean. Know that over time, God is able and willing to clean your heart.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT – 2 April

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”
(John 12, The Bible)

Spend some time meditating on the image of a grain of wheat. Consider a dimension of your own life that, if you let it die, might give rise to new life for yourself or others.

PALM SUNDAY – 9 April

*This time
there will be no flight into Egypt.
This donkey has too much to carry,
too far.
The shadows wait for me:
around the table at Passover,
among those in high places,
in the condemned cell,
on the hill outside...
Time is running out.*

(Josie Smith, Iona community)

What do you dread? What would you seek to escape if you could?
What clock ticks for you?

Light a candle as you bring these things to Jesus,
who knows what it is to face a dark future.

MAUNDY THURSDAY – 13 April

*'When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve;
and while they were eating he said, "Truly I tell you, one
of you will betray me."' (Matthew 26, The Bible)*

Imagine a group of your friends or acquaintances sitting around a
dinner table. Slowly, consider your relationship with each one.
How do you feel about your friendship? What are your shared
memories? How do you fear they could hurt you?
What would you say if it was your last chance to see them?

Choose at least one of these people and either write to them, or
make a date to see them and talk about your reflections.

GOOD FRIDAY – 14 April

*'Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I
commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.'*
(Luke 23, The Bible)

EASTER SATURDAY – 15 April

'There is in God, some say, a deep and dazzling darkness'
(Henry Vaughan)

*'It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land
until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed.'*
(Luke 23, The Bible)

Sit in a dark room. Close your eyes.
In the silence, visualise yourself descending down into the
darkness of a cave or tomb. God knows the darkness.
God knows you. Be in the darkness with God.
What is God saying to you?

EASTER SUNDAY – 16 April

'He is not here; He has risen!'
(Luke 23, The Bible - Words of the angel at Jesus' tomb.)

Join with others today in a communal celebration of Jesus' coming
back to life. Reflect on what that might mean for the way you live.

LENTEN REFLECTIONS

Lent is the forty day period (excluding Sundays) before Easter.
Traditionally used by the Christian Church for reflection,
repentance and resolve to live differently.