

St Matthew's Westminster



Spiritual Resources for Lent Week I

Ash Wednesday – Saturday 27th February 2021

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Introduction to Lent

Lent is a gift to the church. It's a time of training. It's a chance for us to discipline ourselves, of getting ourselves ready for activity. It's not the activity itself. It's part of an annual rhythm. A time of preparation.

Traditionally it was a time of preparation for Easter and for baptism. A time to make sure that our lives are aligned with our Lord whose name we bear. And that's why the traditions include fasting, prayer, silence, confession, and study.

To be honest though, we've all had enough of being in lockdown. We long for things to open up again. Do we really want another 40 days of getting ready?

Well, maybe not. But perhaps this year we will be able to take up Lent in a way we haven't ever before. There is a new chapter ahead for all of us. We will soon be returning to a new way of living. Perhaps precisely what we need is to get ready.

Without the distractions of activity and the enforced constraint on our relationships might be possible that we can perhaps have a go at Lent like never before?

Each week in Lent we will be sending out resources to help guide us on our journey. Each day there will be a bible reading and prayer, and there are short offices of morning and evening prayer.

Even though we are physically apart, this is a journey we share. May Lent be a time of blessing for us all.

Prayer for the Day

Chosen by Fr Peter Bradley

Ash Wednesday

Collect for the Day

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday 18th February

You, O Lord, are the God of those who repent;
reveal your goodness in me;
unworthy as I am, save me according to your great mercy,
and I will praise you all the days of my life;
for all the host of heaven sings your praise,
and yours alone is the glory for ever. Amen.

From the Prayer of Manasses

Friday 19th February

Almighty and eternal God,
when your people wandered in the desert
you drew a living fountain from a rock;
draw tears of repentance from our hard hearts,
that we may return to you, trusting in your compassion,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

14th century

Saturday 20th February

O for a heart to praise my God,
a heart from sin set free;
a heart that always feels thy blood
so freely spilt for me.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,
come quickly from above;
write thy new name upon my heart,
thy new best name of love.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Sunday 21st February – *First Sunday of Lent*

Collect of the Day

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Monday 22nd February

A Lenten grace before meals

Loving Father,
we thank you for your countless blessings,
for this meal, for our family and friends,
and especially for the gift of your Son;
bless this food, and the love that unites us;
keep us forever thankful, and generous in your service,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday 23rd February

Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

From the Liturgy for Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 24th February

Grant, O Lord, that your eyes may be opened
upon all those I love;
tenderly spread your wings over them to protect them;
stretch forth your right hand to bless them;
pour into their hearts the Holy Spirit,
to abide with them as their kind counsellor,
guiding them in all the trials of this life,
and giving them joy and hope in all things.

St Aelred of Rievaulx (1109-1167)

Thursday 25th February

O Lord Jesus Christ,
the sun of the world,
evermore arising and never going down,
brightly shining in our hearts,
drive away the night of sin and the mists of error,
that we may all our life space go without stumbling
and live as in the day time,
who with the Father and with the Holy Ghost
livest and reignest for ever. Amen.

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

Friday 26th February

O Saviour of the world
who by thy Cross and precious Blood have redeemed us,
save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

Book of Common Prayer

Saturday 27th February

Hear us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:
for we have sinned against thee.

Innocent captive, taken unresisting
falsely accused, and for us sinners sentenced,
save us, we pray thee,
Jesus our Redeemer.

Hear us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:
for we have sinned against thee.

From the Lent Prose

Reading for the Day

Ash Wednesday

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Joel 2.12-13

Thursday 18th February

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.

2 Corinthians 5.17-19a

Friday 19th February

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Isaiah 58.6,7

Saturday 20th February

Jesus said, 'There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.'

St Luke 15.7

Sunday 21st February - First Sunday of Lent

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Romans 6.3-5

Monday 22nd February

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5.20

Tuesday 23rd February

Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9.24-end

Wednesday 24th February

I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 7.21-25a

Thursday 25th February

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

Isaiah 58.6-9a

Friday 26th February

Jesus said to the disciples, 'Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.'

St Matthew 6.1-4

Saturday 27th February

Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

St Luke 10.38-end

Spiritual Communion

During this second national lockdown all public acts of worship have been suspended. This means that many people who would have received Holy Communion each Sunday, and some of them every day, are not able to receive the comfort and benefits of the sacrament.

This is a huge loss. However, it is not the first time that the Church has been in such a position. Throughout Christian history some Christian people have found themselves isolated from the sacramental life of the Church for all sorts of reasons, and particularly in times of plague, famine and warfare.

At such times the Church has encouraged people to make what is called a Spiritual Communion. It is a way of uniting yourself with Jesus and entering into communion with him even though you are not able to receive the sacrament itself.

The prayer that follows draws on the story of the woman who comes to Jesus but only touches the hem of his garment. She still receives healing and blessing (See St Mark 5. 25-34). In a way, spiritual communion is like this. We are not able to receive the sacramental bread and wine. But in a spiritual communion we still come to Jesus and he still receives us.

Act of Spiritual Reception

O loving God, in union with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries gathered to make Eucharist, hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son, I offer you praise and thanksgiving.

Even though I am exiled from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Life I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised and with your Son who gave his life for us.

Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me and send your Holy Spirit that I may be filled with your presence.

The Angelus

for which the church bell rings out daily at the beginning of the day, at noon, and at the start of evening, recalling the centrality of the Incarnation.

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary:
and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

Behold, the handmaid of the Lord:
be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

And the Word was made flesh:
and dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God:
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Almighty God, pour thy grace into our hearts;
that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ
by the message of an angel, so by his ✠ Cross and Passion
we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection;
through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Simple Form of Morning Prayer

Opening Sentences

✠ In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Lord, open our lips;
and we shall praise your name.

Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving help among the nations.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Banish, O Lord, all darkness from our hearts and minds,
through Christ, the Dayspring from on high,
who fulfilled your ancient promise
that we should find our freedom in your peace;
for all ages belong to you,
yesterday, today and for ever. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Taken from the daily readings found on pages [7-9](#)

The Gospel Canticle | Benedictus

Refrain: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

✠ Blessèd be the Lord, the God of Israel:
who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant, David.
Through his holy prophets, God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us;
to show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath God swore to our father, Abraham,
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight, all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Prayers

- Give thanks for a new day, for all God's blessings.
- Pray for those we will encounter today, and those far from us.
- Pray for the blessing of peace for all nations and people.
- Pray that our time may be consecrated by the presence of Christ.

Collects

Ash Wednesday

God the only saviour,
our lives are laid open before you:
help us to turn to you this Lent,
and through your Son,
the skilful healer,
strengthen us and make us whole
in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Weekdays from Ash Wednesday

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin,
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lent 1

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conclusion

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love. **Amen.**

✠ Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Simple Form of Evening Prayer

Opening Sentences

✠ O God, come to our aid:
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Blessing of Light

Blessèd are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers,
creator of the changes of day and night,
giving rest to the weary,
renewing the strength of those who are spent,
bestowing upon us occasions of song in the evening.
As you have protected us in the day that is past,
so be with us in the coming night;
keep us from every sin, every evil, and every fear;
for you are our light and salvation,
and the strength of our life.

Blessèd be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Blessèd be God for ever.

Scripture Reading

Taken from the daily readings found on pages [7-9](#)

The Gospel Canticle | Magnificat

Refrain: Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.

✠ My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
He has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.
He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.
Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his servant, Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,
the promise made to our ancestors;
to Abraham and his children for ever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.
Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.

Prayers

- Give thanks for the day past, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.
- Pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit.
- Pray for those who have died, those we have loved,
those who have inspired us.
- As the day fades we commend ourselves to the love and mercy of God.

Collects

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Evening Prayer may conclude with the Antiphon Ave, Regina caelorum

Hail, O Queen of Heaven
Welcome, O Queen of Heaven.
Welcome, O Lady of Angels
Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate
From whom unto the world, a light has arisen:
Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,
Lovely beyond all others,
Farewell, most beautiful maiden,
And pray for us to Christ.

V. Allow me to praise thee, O sacred Virgin.

R. Against thy enemies give me strength.

Grant unto us, O merciful God, a defence against our weakness, that we who remember the holy Mother of God, by the help of her intercession, may rise from our iniquities, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.