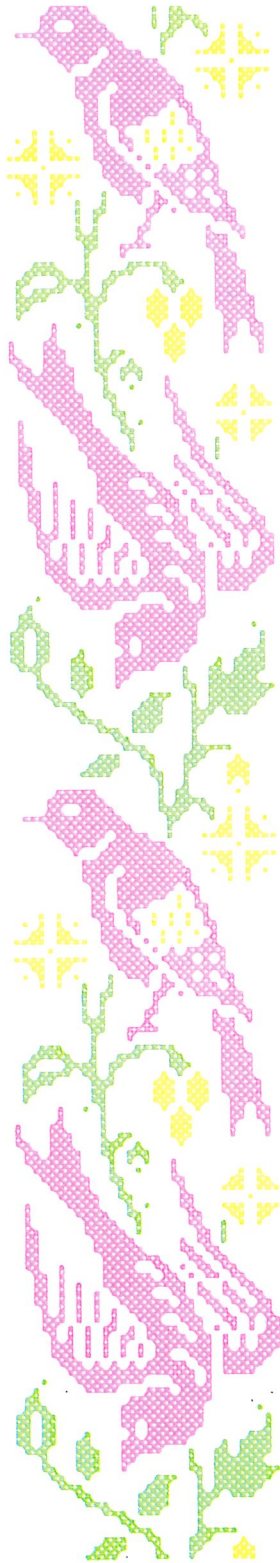


# Lent Week One

## REMEMBER



Martin Delaney reminds us that Lent, a unique opportunity for turning towards God, is also a time for remembering God's goodness.

### WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH

#### ASH WEDNESDAY

*Wear Christianity with joy*

**Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2;**

**Matthew 6:1-6. 16-18**

Lent is a time for good deeds, fasting and service to God – service that has lasting change on our being. Jesus calls us to be unlike the hypocrites in our actions: to give to the needy without fanfare and trumpets, but instead in a way that only God can see. This is how we bring about the Kingdom: by making others in need feel truly welcome to our support. On Ash Wednesday, it can be challenging to think of ourselves as anything other than being on display. We will be wearing an ash cross on our foreheads, as we go about our day. Jesus asks us to wear no sign of our suffering in fasting but instead to put oil on our heads, a sign of being anointed or celebration. How can we, in this time of fasting and service, wear our Christianity with joy? Can we be free from hypocrisy, showing no hint of pain caused by that which we have given up?

**Father, let us be of service in a way that requires no recognition, but instead let us be joyful in our service this Lent. Amen.**

### THURSDAY 3 MARCH

*Be ever nearer to God*

**Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25**

What does it mean to deny oneself and take up our cross daily? When we think of all that we are defined by, it is almost impossible to separate from our own ego. Whether a lawyer, a nurse, a police officer, a priest, a teacher, there is always a sense of identity wrapped up in the roles we play. In Luke, Jesus calls us to reject all that we are outside of our relationship with God. The call to take up the cross daily is a suggestion that this practice takes discipline. It is a daily challenge. Lent is a gift in our practice as Christians, a time to daily strive for that which is other than ourselves, a time to be ever nearer to that which is of God.

**Holy Spirit, come to me in times of great challenge, to accompany me on the journey to understanding my true self. Amen.**

*“While I was Canon for Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, I presented these crosses in places like Bujumbura in Burundi... To this day that cross remains within the sound of gunfire. This symbol is not one of ivory tower isolation: it speaks into the very heart of the wars, torture and terror that so fill our world.”*

Archbishop Justin Welby, 2016

## FRIDAY 4 MARCH

### WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

*Welcome God*

**Isaiah 58:1-9;  
Matthew 9:14-15**

In Isaiah, there is the sense of there being more to this fast than we have in fact chosen, of there being more to this Lent. There is the sense that, without feeding the hungry or taking care of the poor, then this fasting is worthless. We are told that this is when the Lord will answer us. The effect of this is a perception of action and giving, leading to reward or receiving, and that it is only in this process that we truly receive. On this Women's World Day of Prayer, let us come together in a way that allows us to offer more than just our thoughts to God, but to welcome God into our lives by way of love, compassion and action with our fellow brothers and sisters.

**Mary, Mother of God, join us on this Women's World Day of Prayer, as we ask to receive more of your Son, through the giving of ourselves. Amen.**

## SATURDAY 5 MARCH

*“Follow me”*

**Isaiah 58:9-14; Luke 5:27-32**

How do we measure our sense of worth? There is a beautiful message of hope in today's readings. “Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer” is the promise that Isaiah makes. Jesus shows us that all are welcome. Each of us are worthy of healing through the love of Christ. When judgement and condemnation come towards Jesus for befriending the likes of Levi, Jesus reminds his critics that it is the sick who require a hospital. This is an incredible promise to us all, that no matter how much we have done wrong – no matter how sick we have got – we are all worthy of calling upon the Lord. Then it shall be demonstrated that our lives are worth saving, as we answer one simple call: “Follow me”.

**Loving Father, give us the humility to call upon you in our time of need and give us the strength to follow you wherever you may lead us. Amen.**

## SUNDAY 6 MARCH 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

*Have faith*

**Deuteronomy 26:4-10;  
Romans 10:8-13; Luke 4:1-13**

As we journey through our own wilderness this Lenten period, we are reassured in the knowledge that Jesus too was tested for forty days and forty nights. There may be times when you feel yourself tempted to break away from your own practices, your fasting process or service-giving. Have faith in the fact that you are sharing this journey with the Lord, that in your various challenges you are not alone. Trust in the Lord Jesus, for he has walked this path before us all, he who answers every call. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

**Lord Jesus Christ, we ask you to walk this path beside us, as you have done before. Help us to be unwavering in our faith, so that are never tempted from your road. Amen.**