



ST TERESA'S

Newsletter

21st February 2021

My dear friends

As I write this newsletter my period of isolation is drawing to a close. 10 days in the presbytery! I must admit I have not found it particularly easy. I have really missed seeing you all at the Wednesday and Weekend masses. I usually walk for at least 1 hour each day and I have missed the freedom of leaving the house and being able to enjoy the clean fresh air and the lovely countryside.

However, your care and concern for me expressed through cards, emails, phone calls, offers of help and the lovely home-cooked meals and cakes have made this experience much more bearable and I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart. I have reflected very much these days on the implications of this virus for our lives and for our world and how it is really forcing us to face our frailty and our mortality. Be sure I keep you all very much in my prayers.

Today is the first Sunday of Lent. We begin our journey towards Easter, when we will celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. As I was reflecting on the readings and what I would write for the newsletter, I was really struck by the opening prayer for Sunday's liturgy. I think we often miss the beauty and richness of the opening prayers of the mass.

**Grant, almighty God,
Through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ...**

That prayer is asking God to help us understand the mystery of Christ and the riches hidden in this mystery. Surely the mystery refers to the meaning of his death and resurrection. When Jesus suffered and died, it looked as if his goodness, his kindness, his gentleness, his mercy was attacked and destroyed for ever - powerless in the face of evil. But of course, it was not the end. The resurrection of Jesus proved that in fact evil is powerless in the face of the fidelity, generosity, selflessness, kindness, and goodness of Jesus. Evil is completely powerless when faced with God's love. Death was not the end. Through his death and resurrection Jesus won the victory over evil and he wins that victory for us too. This is the mystery of Christ and the riches hidden in him-he loved us so much that he gave his life for us. Perhaps it will take us all of eternity to understand those riches but we can make a start.

Lent is a journey, and our Christian life is a journey- a journey with God and to God. We lose our way sometimes, because we are weak and frail, only dust, but dust loved by God. The Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent is from Mark 1: 12-15. The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness, where he remained for 40 days, tempted by the devil. All of the synoptic gospels recount three temptations.

Most Biblical scholars would say that the three temptations might not be three consecutive temptations happening almost simultaneously at a particular moment. Perhaps they were the temptations Jesus had to

face all through his public ministry- temptations to compromise his mission. The first and the third temptation- to change stones to bread and to jump from the top of the Temple -are urging him to become 'a kind of superstar'. But his mission is to be the Servant King. The King of love who gave his life freely for each one of us. The second temptation is to worship the devil who offers power and wealth. But this road takes Jesus away from his true path-total fidelity to God and total self-giving to us. The road of the temptations would force him to compromise that mission.

Perhaps, then, there were several wilderness experiences during his public ministry. Moments when he had to return to who he was and to what his mission was. We can take heart to know that Jesus faced these wilderness moments as we must. Yes, he is Emmanuel, God with us. But he is also deeply human as we are, except that he is without sin.

What helped him through these wilderness moments? Surely his deep and strong relationship with his Father- which was like a rock, like an anchor. That relationship gave him the courage and the strength to keep following the road that eventually led to Calvary.

We too have our wilderness experiences, our times in the desert when we are forced to come face to face with the reality of our lives. Things we have done and left undone. Sickness, broken relationships, poor choices and their consequences. Our own sinfulness- wanting status, everyone looking up to me, wanting power, seeking wealth for its own sake. Our addictions, pettiness, refusals to forgive. The list is endless.

What can help us through these experiences? I think it is only our deep and strong relationship with Jesus and with his Father – moments of quiet and peace when we can really open our hearts to the Lord and allow him to enter and to heal us and strengthen us.

I wish you all a beautiful Lent. And I pray that all of us will understand more and more the riches of the mystery of Christ. I pray that on our Lenten journey all of us will come to understand more and more that we are 'dust, but dust loved by God'. I pray that we will open our hearts more and more to the Lord and allow him to draw us more deeply into communion with him. I pray that all of us will allow Jesus to transform us into the persons we were created to be.

Have a very joyful and blessed start to Lent.

Stay safe and well!

Fr Lijo

Weekly Notices

Stations of the Cross: During Lent we will pray the Stations of the Cross every Wednesday after the morning mass. Once again, we will have to change our method of doing this in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. All of us will remain in our seats and the reader will read the prayers and reflections from the lectern. We are able to turn to face each Station but we must all remain in our place. We will also have a shortened version of the Stations of the Cross. Nevertheless, I know it will still be very meaningful and prayerful.

Coffee and Company: If you would like an opportunity to chat with other parishioners just follow the link below at 10.30am on Tuesday February 23rd. Join Zoom Meeting.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75719475880?pwd=ZE1SS3EwTHNxd2liZFBYz3RiUEpZUT09>

Meeting ID: 757 1947 5880

Passcode: Ap887h

Lenten Resources: Some of you may find the resources from the Pastoral Ministry Office of the Diocese helpful as you begin your Lenten journey. If you click on the link you should be able to find information for different ideas such as an online prayer course, Daily Scripture snippets, a Jesuit daily retreat, joining a reflection group and many more resources. I do encourage you to take a look. I am certain you will find something that appeals to you. <https://pastoralministryoffice.org/home-copy/growing-in-faith/parish-resources/lent-resources/>

Climbing the Holy Mountain of Easter: Would you like an opportunity to share and reflect on the Sunday readings during Lent as a way of preparing to celebrate Holy Week and the Easter Triduum more meaningfully? We will be meeting via Zoom starting this Ash Wednesday 17 February, and continuing Wednesday 24 February, and 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 March. If you are interested in joining the group, please email Liz Clark on liz.clark4@btopenworld.com

Would you like to learn more about your faith? Consider joining online to follow the **Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies** or **Diocesan Certificate in Religious Studies**. Both courses offer the same eight modules in Scripture and Catholic Theology with the CCRS leading to a nationally recognised qualification. Those who follow the CCRS/DCRS say they gain a great deal from the course, deepening their knowledge and understanding of their faith. To find out more about the course, contact Steve O'Brien. Email obrien@nores.org.uk or for an application form contact Ann Collon. Email: admin@nores.org.uk or visit our website www.nores.org.uk/AdultEducationCCRS

St. Teresa's Parish Christmas Challenge 2020: The challenge is now over and despite the restrictions of lockdown, a remarkable total of £585 was raised, to be divided equally between Cafod and our parish. A big thank you to everyone involved, either in accepting a challenge or by supporting someone else in their endeavours.

On behalf of Missio, Angela Bailey would like to thank all the Red Missio box holders who kindly delivered the contents of their boxes to her. The total collected was £710.23 which was fantastic considering less use of cash during the pandemic. For those who sent money directly to Missio, the total Parish contribution will be announced in the Spring.

Our parish CAFOD Lent Appeal – Family Fast Day Friday 26th February: Please give this Lent to reach vulnerable communities around the world with water and to provide other vital support. Donate online directly at cafod.org.uk/lent if you are able, or by using a CAFOD envelope. These will be available after the masses next week, 27th and 28th February. We also hope to hold our own Cafod sponsored walk in April as part of Cafod's **BIG WALK FOR WATER**, walking in support of vulnerable communities who need access to clean water.

Princes Risborough Food Cupboard: Thank you all so much for your generous donations. Donations may be made to St Mary's Church Bell Tower, 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, or in the trolley at the entrance to Tesco's at any time they're open.

Things we could do with more of: Tins of peas (garden, not mushy or marrowfat), Tins of sweetcorn, Tins of other vegetables, Tins of soup, Tins of fish, Tins of fruit, Tins of rice pudding, Tins or cartons of custard, Long-life dairy milk (UHT), Jars or packets of coffee, Packets of biscuits, Fruit squash, Easter Eggs – special gifts for children at Easter. **Things we have plenty of, so don't need any more at the moment:** Tins of potatoes, Tins of mushy and marrowfat peas

F I R S T S U N D A Y O F L E N T

Sunday 21st February	9: 30 am	Stan Elcock, RIP.	
Monday 22nd February	Private Mass	Helen, Int.	St Peter's Chair
Tuesday 23rd February	Private Mass	The People of the Parish	St Polycarp
Wednesday 24th February	10: 00 am	Celine Doody, RIP.	Weekday of Lent
Thursday 25th February	Private Mass	Marie Leith, Int.	Weekday of Lent
Friday 26th February	Private Mass	Evelyn Scott-Jackson, RIP	Weekday of Lent

MASS BOOKINGS for Wed 24th and Sat/Sun 27/28th February 2021

Please: Do wear Masks – Do not come if shielding, symptomatic or self-isolating.

Please think carefully –

about your own vulnerability – and that of others around you –
before deciding whether to come. At this time, there is no obligation to attend.

For each booking, we need: **Names**, which **Mass**, number of **Seats** and **PHONE** number

10am Mass on Wednesday 24th February

Followed by socially-distanced Stations of the Cross

Booking: opens: 9am on Saturday 20th February

: closes: 9am on Tuesday 23rd February

Confirmation: by 6pm on Tuesday 23rd February

Email: stteresa.WEDNESDAY.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301435 (or answerphone)

Masses at 6.30pm, Saturday 27th and 9.30am, Sunday 28th February

Booking: opens 9am Monday 22nd February

: closes 6pm Thursday 25th February ***Note earlier deadline***

Confirmation: by 9am on Friday 26th February

Email: stteresa.WEEKEND.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301374 (or answerphone)