



Holy Week Services 2012

Mon/Tues/Wed 7pm Mass at St Mary's
Mon/Tues/Wed 8pm Mass at St James

Maundy Thursday 5th April

Mass of the Last Supper 7.30pm St Mary's
Followed by a Vigil till midnight

Good Friday 6th April

Children's Service 11.00am St Mary's
Meditation 12 noon St Mary's
The Liturgy 3.00pm St James
The Movie *The Passion* will screen at 7.30pm at St Mary's.

Holy Saturday 7th April

Church cleaning in both Churches in the morning
Easter Vigil Mass 8.00pm St Mary's
Followed by champagne and fireworks

Easter Day 8th April

Festal Mass 10.00am St Mary's
with Admission to Holy Communion
And children's activities during the Mass

Festal Mass 11.00am St James

**We invite you to join us to celebrate these,
the most important and beautiful services of the
Christian Year.**

*The United Benefice of St Mary with All Souls,
Kilburn and St James, West Hampstead*



Lent

Keeping a Holy Lent

The meaning of Lent

Lent is not a time to make yourself miserable

Often we can be encouraged to think that the season of Lent is all about people giving up their favourite treats, from sugar through chocolate to alcohol; though with the usual fortifying thought that in doing so we will lose some weight and get a little healthier. For some of us it is also associated with often rather dreary Lent Groups and study, additional services and soul searching.

Neither approach really does justice to the wonderful opportunity of the 40 days that run from Ash Wednesday to Easter Eve (Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, and ends on Easter Eve, the forty days comprising the intervening weekdays, as Sundays do not count!)

So what is it really all about?

Over the last 2000 years, three main elements have gone into the making of Lent. They are:

1. *Preparation for Easter Baptism.* The early Church (especially in Jerusalem, 4th century) came to use the forty days building up to Easter as a time to prepare their new converts for Baptism. For these converts, Lent was a time of great and joyful anticipation.

2. *Time for penance and reconciliation with the Church.* Since early times, Lent has also been used a time when those who fallen away from the Church were prepared for re-admission to Holy Communion and full active membership. This often involved confession and penance and in the process forgiveness and restoration brought a deep sense of peace and security.

3. *A fast in preparation for Holy Week and Easter.* This, too, has been popular since earliest times, and normally meant giving up food or some food until the evening of each day. The point was not to punish oneself, but to abstain, in order to both focus the mind in prayer to God, and to appreciate the real value (if any) of what one was depriving oneself. The value of the food uneaten was often offered as a gift to the poor or the Church.

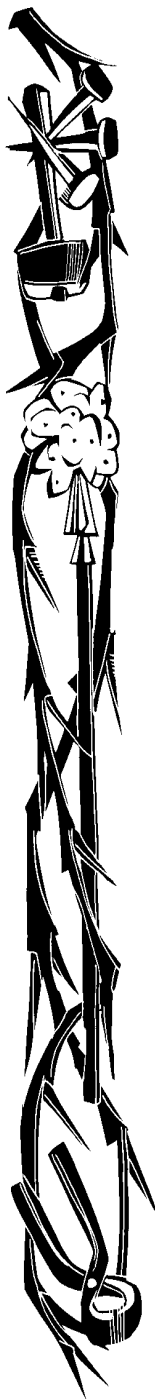
Weekday services in the Benefice

Monday	8am	Morning Prayer	St James
	6pm	Evening Prayer	St Mary's
	7pm	Mass	St Mary's
Tuesday	8am	Morning Prayer	St James
	10:30am	Mass	St James
	6pm	Evening Prayer	St Mary's
Wednesday	8am	Morning Prayer	St James
	10.30am	Mass	St Mary's
	6pm	Evening Prayer	St Mary's
Thursday	8am	Mass	St James
	6pm	Evening Prayer	St Mary's
Friday	8am	Morning Prayer	St James
	6pm	Evening Prayer	St Mary's
Saturday	9.15am	Morning Prayer	St James
	12 noon	Mass	St Mary's

Additional Sunday Services in Lent

Sunday 26th Feb	6pm	Stations of the Cross	St James
Monday 27th Feb	6.30pm	Holy Rosary	St Mary's
Monday 5th Mar	6.30pm	Holy Rosary	St Mary's
Sunday 11th Mar	6pm	Stations of the Cross	St Mary's
Monday 12th Mar	6pm	Holy Rosary	St Mary's
Saturday 17th Mar	10am	Prayer Retreat	St James
Monday 19th Mar	6.30pm	Holy Rosary	St Mary's
Sunday 25th Mar	6pm	Stations of the Cross	St James
Monday 26th Mar	6.30pm	Holy Rosary	St Mary's





accepting the faith that could inspire such love of others

Lent has always been a time when Christians have been asked to think again about the direction of their spiritual lives and this must necessarily include how we use our income. It is true that not many of us are wealthy, but very few of us are as poor as the woman in the story of the widow's mite, and nearly all of us could afford to give some more of our income to help others. Amy Carmichael, the missionary, expressed the heart of almsgiving when she said '*You cannot give without loving, you cannot love without giving*'. Christians are called to show God's love to the world, and how we view our cash is a good indicator of where our hearts are fixed.

This Lent, alongside all the other aspects of the spiritual life, you are invited to give some careful thought to how you use your money. Do you give to charity? Do you make regular contributions to our Church? If not, then you should be and you should start doing so this Lent. (We do not apologise for being so direct—being generous with our money is a vital part of a Christian life).

'Do not lay up for yourself treasure on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourself treasure in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also' (Matt 6:19-20)

Saturday 17th March

10am till 3pm

Experiencing Prayer—Retreat Day

To be held in St James

Please sign up on the list at the back of each church!

The Movie *The Passion* will be screened on Good Friday at 7.30pm at St Mary's.

Children's Holy Week Activity Day—Tuesday 3rd April in St Mary's Hall. Lots of craft and activities from 10am till 1pm.

Lent is Joyful

Lent is therefore about joyful anticipation, about renewed peace and a new focus on prayer and charity. It is a time of hope and happiness as we cleanse and renew ourselves to be ready to celebrate the wonderful news of the resurrection on Easter Day.

This Lent we invite you to join us in this time of joy. There are services to attend, new ways of praying to explore, days on which to fast and new experiences of prayer and worship to try.

This little book has articles about some of the traditional elements of a holy Lent, we will also be providing each member of our Churches with a small devotional booklet to aid you in your daily prayers in Lent, there will be other material for children and families too.

If you would like to get more from the season then you might also want to attend one of the additional services of prayer being held or come along to one of the regular weekday services. Any member of the clergy will also be happy to talk to you about prayer, the spiritual journey and how we grown in faith.

Charity

There is also a suggestion about fasting, and about charitable giving. This coming year we are going to be supporting Tiyanjani Palliative Care Trust who provide medical supplies where they are most needed in Malawi. Some church members will recall that Meg and Will, from our congregations, worked in Malawi last year and we supported their work through prayer and charity. They write '*Tiyanjani (which means 'get together')* look after all the patients with terminal disease in the hospital. They also run outreach programmes for patients who are too weak to make the journey Hospital. They are desperately short of simple things like bandages. They sometimes provide simple food for people who are dying as well emotional support for them and their families. We have worked with them loads over the last year and I am always astonished by what they can achieve with even meagre resources. They also do HIV counselling.'

Above all we would like you to be joyful, to remember that as members of the Church God calls us into a relationship with Him that is fresh and full of life and hope. Wishing you a happy and holy Lent.

Fr Andrew

The four elements of a Holy Lent

1. Prayer and the life of the Christian

Since the earliest days of the Christian faith, prayer has been offered to God, through Jesus, in both formal and informal ways. Christians are called to be people of prayer, an experience of our relationship with God that underpins all that we do. Our ancestors in the faith from the very earliest times prayed regularly and every day. As it says in the Gospel of Luke after the resurrection the disciples 'were continually in the Temple blessing God' *Luke 24:53*.

The practise of praying through the day comes originally from our Jewish inheritance. In Psalm 119 we hear of praising God seven times day, and Psalm 134 calls on the servants of the Lord to stand before him at night. All Christians pray daily and for many of us this means finding some time each day, morning or evening or both, to set aside some time to offer praise, to pray for the Church and the world and for particular concerns. Prayer should also involve time given over to silence, without words, simply to rest in the presence and love of our Saviour and to grow in peace and confidence. If you would like to learn more about prayer then please don't hesitate to ask one of the clergy or other members of the ministry team about their own lives and how they manage to keep up a disciplined pattern of attention to God. We have much to learn from each other.

In Church, and in more formal than personal and individual prayer, over the years Christians have traditionally punctuated the day with short services sometimes called the Daily Office, which has its roots in the Latin word *officium* which means a dutiful or respectful action. We have a duty to pray for the Church and the world, and using a set form of prayers provides a simple way to fulfil this duty.

The basic elements of an Office are psalms, readings from

This years full fast days:

**February 22nd
April 6th**

**Ash Wednesday
Good Friday**

Lesser fasts:

**All Fridays in Lent
February 29th and March 3rd as Ember Days**

NB Those over 60 or under 12 have always been excused the need to fast. Older people and diabetics should think carefully before fasting, and speak to Fr Andrew if they are unsure about what to do.

4. Charitable Giving in Lent

Almsgiving is a central part of the Christian Tradition. Based on the Jewish practice of giving money as a sign of piety and to relieve the suffering of the poor - Christians have followed Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount to 'Give to those who ask from you' (*Matthew 6:42*).

Jesus, however, developed the tradition and tried to ensure that almsgiving would be seen as an act of devotion, rather a public display of piety. He warned his followers to '*Beware of practising your piety before men, in order to be seen by them... When you give alms, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do. But when you give alms, do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing, so that your alms giving may be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you*'. (*Matt 6:2-4*)

In the early Church it was the tradition of charity, the sharing of wealth with the poor, which marked the Christian community from other forms of belief. By the time of the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 314 large numbers of people were being helped by the charitable giving of members of the Church. Such selfless generosity made an enormous impression on the pagan world and lead to many





and Good Friday itself. A less intense form of fast, not eating meat or dairy products, was the norm on all Fridays and continued in the Church of England almost till the present day, and is still practised by many of the devout. (*'Fish on Friday'*).

The rule of not eating before Communion, as a spiritual exercise, is also still encouraged with the recommendation that we should not eat before we go to Church for Holy Communion. Ideally we should fast for three hours but certainly we should not receive Holy Communion if we have eaten within an hour of Mass.

In recent years fasting has almost faded away, but fasting is still recommended in the prayer books of the Church of England for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and on the traditional Ember Days (Days of special prayer for the Church) designated throughout the year. Special acts of self discipline (unspecified) are also called for on Fridays and during Lent.

The point of fasting is not to lose weight or to save money; it is about offering to God the devotion that motivated it and we are encouraged to offer to charity the money saved. The time not spent in preparing and eating can be used for prayer or spiritual reading and you will be surprised at how much time we do spend over food in a day.

A fast can simply be not eating meat (as on Friday's) or a fuller fast of leaving out a meal or two. This year we are encouraging all our congregation to omit some or all meals as a fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and to observe the 'fish on Friday' rule for the rest of the season. We would also like you to set aside some money as an act of charity—which will go to our parish collection for

scripture, canticles and prayers. Sometimes there is a hymn or a responsive form of prayer. Through joining in with the Church's continual offering of prayer we find ourselves caught up in a much greater work of the Spirit. When it is difficult to find the right words to pray, the Office offers us an opportunity to listen to the Word of God, to reflect upon it, and sometimes to be taken beyond words to a place of silent contemplation and adoration, through the action of the Holy Spirit within us.

Two simple forms of the Daily Office are offered most days in our parishes—Morning Prayer is said at 8.00am Monday—Friday in St James and at 9.15am on Saturday morning. Morning Prayer is also said at St Mary's at 9.15am each Sunday morning. Evening Prayer is offered each evening at 6.00pm in St Mary's from Monday till Friday.

You are invited to come along to these services at any time, and perhaps particularly during this coming Lent. We have also drawn up a simple form of the Daily Office that is available in both Churches. If you can't make the services in Church the short Office is intended to provide a short time of prayer and bible reading to punctuate the day at whatever time feels most appropriate. It may be that you can make time to pray on the journey to or from work, or perhaps when you wake, or just before you go to sleep. Whenever you choose to pray you will be joining in with the endless song of the angels in heaven as well as the countless number of Christians throughout the world.

2. Confession and the life of the Christian

Confession, as a spiritual discipline, is often thought that it is something that Roman Catholics do, and something good Anglicans need not think about.

But Confession is a part of all our spiritual lives: at each service we start with a general Confession in which we ask





for God's forgiveness – *'Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you...'*. In preparation for this weekly Confession at the Mass we are encouraged to think about the way we have lived in the week before, and to be aware of our failings. We then listen for the priest to pronounce God's forgiveness (the absolution) and sing a hymn of praise thanking God for the refreshment and new life we have received. (The Gloria).

Individual Confession is meant to compliment and build on the general confession that we share in week by week. The New Testament encourages us to *'Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed'* (James 5:16) and the famous Protestant theologian Bonhoeffer called Confession the *'renewal of the joy of baptism'*. As we try to grow as Christians it is inevitable that there will be times when we do things that we are ashamed of, and come to lie heavily in our minds. We may become aware that there are particular failings that we are prone to, and that we struggle with overcoming.

Individual Confession, with its very personal assurance of God's continuing love can be a powerful way of addressing these spiritual questions. In individual Confession we come before God very much as we are, without the ability to hide behind others or to slide over the things we know we should confess. Individual Confession encourages us to think more deeply about the ways we have failed to honour God, to honour others and, importantly, to honour ourselves. As Christians we come before God knowing our failings and seeking God's healing touch:- being able to acknowledge our sins before God, with the gentle guidance of a priest, can be a powerfully healing process.

In the Church of England individual Confession has long been seen as an act of personal devotion that can greatly enrich the spiritual life of the believer. The rule has always been *'All may, none must and some should'*. All of us may

make our individual confession, though none of us has to, but equally there are some of us who should.

It is a part of the lives of the priests who serve here. If we are to offer to hear your confessions then it is only right that we should know what it involves and can speak of its value from personal experience.

Confession is to be recommended to all who are truly serious about developing their spiritual lives. It is a powerful aid for the Christian who wants to grow in holiness with God.

Lent has always been a time when Confession is offered, and Fr Andrew will be available in St Mary's Church every Monday evening after the 7.00pm Mass to speak to people about Confession and would happily make a time to meet with you, if you cannot make the set times in the week.

Do think seriously about making your Confession this Lent.

3. Fasting during Lent

Abstaining from food as a religious exercise is an ancient tradition in Christianity. It is seen as an expression of sorrow for sin; as an offering of humility for a particular prayer intention for oneself or for another. It can be a very helpful way of focusing the mind for prayer. In recent years the idea of fasting as a healthy way of cleansing the body has begun to gain popularity, recognising the clear state of mental alertness that it can bring about.

In the early Church fasting meant not eating until the main meal of the day, usually in mid-afternoon and was widely practised before the Easter celebration and by people preparing to be baptised. As Lent developed as an idea in the 4th Century, fasting came to be a part of the season for all Christians, particularly on Ash Wednesday, all Fridays

