

LENT AT HOME 2021

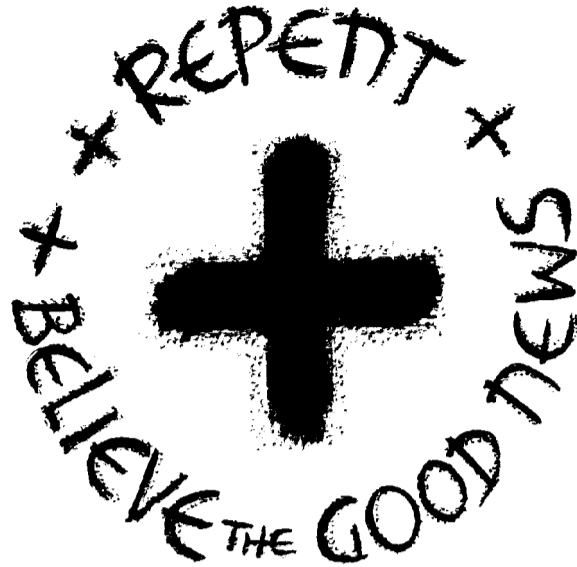
This year's Lent will be very different from any we have experienced. For most of us, it will be something we do at home, rather than in church or school. We will each need to find ways of marking this Season that suit our own situation. Hopefully this little "journal" will help you focus on YOUR Lent, and count the days of this special Season of growth and renewal.

Lent is all about Baptism

If you were asked "What is Lent all about?" the answers might vary: it's about giving something up, it's about Jesus' death on the cross, it's about preparing for Easter. Would you be surprised to be told it's all about baptism?

In the history of the Church Lent began as a special time for catechumens – those who were in the final weeks of their journey to baptism at the Easter Vigil: it was called "The Period of Purification and Enlightenment" (a title restored in the Rite of Christian initiation of Adults), and in these few weeks the catechumens would receive instruction and celebrate certain ceremonies – such as the presentation of the creed, anointings and special blessings called "scrutinies". This was all to get ready for the moment when, at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night, they would be baptized and begin their new life in the Church.

Why baptize at Easter though? Because baptism is about death and resurrection! Seriously! It is the way in which we become part of Jesus in his dying (Good Friday) and rising (Easter Sunday) We think of water as being a symbol of life, or of cleansing, but it is also a symbol of death (just think about floods and torrents and shipwrecks!) Being submerged in water (as baptism was done originally) is "going into the tomb with Jesus"; bursting up from the water is "rising from the tomb." So, when could be better than Holy Week to celebrate our death and rebirth in Jesus? For those who have already been baptized (which is most of us!) we can still walk the same pathway through Lent – though for us it is not towards new birth, but to a RENEWAL of our new birth. We start Lent in dust and ashes, in the hot, waterless wilderness with Jesus, but we end it bathing in the clear, sparkling new waters of the Easter Vigil. Easter is, very literally, our new beginning every year, and Lent is the time when we get ready to celebrate that new life.



Renewal and rebirth mean CHANGE: Christian living is about closeness to God, generosity to others, integrity with self. But these things cannot be achieved without action – we have to decide to do something about them every day! This is a challenge, especially when our lives are so full and busy, and when we can find ourselves "running along the tram tracks" of the daily routine—especially during a pandemic. So we have this Season of Lent, which is about stepping out of the routine to learn something about ourselves, and to focus on living more Christian lives. How do we use this season?

Making the Most of Lent

People sometimes wonder just how many days are in Lent? We always hear about "forty days" of Lent, but if you look at a calendar, you will find that there are actually 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday! The reasons for this are complicated and historical (long ago fasting was forbidden on Sundays, so a few days were added to get back up to 40!) The point of "40 days" are to remind us of Jesus fasting in the desert for that length of time. Rather than counting the days, it's much better to try and stick to the SPIRIT OF THE SEASON. So we don't take "Sundays off", but see the whole Season as a journey through the desert with Jesus.

Realistic promises

Before Lent starts on Wednesday, make some decisions – promises, if you like. Traditionally we observe Lent in three ways: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Find a promise in each of these three areas, and WRITE IT DOWN! This helps us stay focused! Then if you can, come and receive the Ashes on Wednesday to ask for God's blessing on your Lenten promises. And then it starts: day by day, keep your promises. If you don't manage it one day, DON'T

GIVE UP! Just think why you didn't keep your promise, say sorry and start again. And when you get to Easter, perhaps your promises will have become good habits that you will decide to keep going!

So, what sort of Lenten promises should you make? The traditional "set" is prayer (giving God time), fasting (giving things up) and almsgiving (giving things away).

PRAYER: Wasting time with God.

Decide to spend some time each day with God in prayer – even just four or five minutes is enough. Find a quiet place, sit, read a short passage of Scripture (such as on this sheet) and just waste five minutes with God. You don't need to "say prayers" or use special words. It doesn't matter if your mind wanders, as long as you share your thoughts with God! Stick to the time each day, and do it every day! It will get easier the more you do it, and you will feel it doing something to you! Be imaginative too: since you cannot follow the Stations of the Cross in church, why not set up your own Stations at home—perhaps up fourteen stairs, or round the garden, or even just going from room to room, ending at your prayer space.

FASTING: What to give up?

When you are young, giving up sweets is an easy choice for Lent! But what about some more suitable things as we get older? Lent is not just about giving up chocolate and treats! Could you spend 40 days without: Facebook; Instagram; Twitter; Netflix; Makeup; Chips; Fast food; Cheese; Xbox/PS; A particular TV show; The Internet; using the car one day a week? Perhaps these seem like bigger, more real challenges! Why not try one and use it to LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF and what makes you tick? *Perhaps the best thing to "give up" in Lent is a bad habit: you can always ask loved ones for suggestions!*

ALMSGIVING: openness to others

Plan your giving! Get an old jam jar, clean it out and label it "Lent Giving", then decide on putting aside a certain amount of money each day/week (whether it's 50p or £50) and then give it away – bring it to Church for the SVP or CAFOD box, donate online to a charity, find a collection tin in a local shop or petrol station. And remember charity isn't just about money – can you give a helping hand to someone you live near or work with? *Can you find one **Simple Act of Kindness** to do each day? Now there's a challenge that could change the world!*

**Wednesday 17th February
Ash Wednesday**

Saint Paul says: "Do not neglect the grace of God that you have received ... now is the favourable time; this is the day of salvation."

We make our promises to God for the Season and receive ashes as a sign that we want to change our lives.

Put a tick in the boxes below each day as you keep your Lenten promises:

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Thursday 18th February
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said "The Son of Man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day."

Jesus knows what he will have to do to save us: as we enter Lent let us make sure we have a sense of direction—where do we want Lent to take us this year?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Friday 19th February
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "the time will come for the bridegroom to be taken away—and then they will fast."

"Giving up" is about realising what we need and what we do not need. Let's pray today that we will be happy to go without.

Try to pray the Stations of the Cross today

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Saturday 20th February
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said "It is not those who are well who need the doctor, but the sick. I have come to call sinners to repentance."

As we think about our lives, how honest are we about our sins, our faults, our failings? Find time to examine your conscience today.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Sunday 21st February
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

Jesus said "Repent and believe the Good News!"

Jesus faces temptations in the wilderness and says "No". What are our temptations? How do we say "No"? How do we help each other face up to temptations?



PRAY FAST GIVE

**Monday 22nd February
THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER,
APOSTLE**

Jesus said: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church. An the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it."

Today we celebrate the authority of Saint Peter and his successors: pray for Pope Francis today.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Tuesday 23rd February
Saint Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr**

Jesus said: "Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy."

Today let us think about our prayer and how much time and effort we put into it—try to say the Our Father at least once.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Wednesday 24th February
Lent Weekday**

"Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn."

Today let us look closely at our lives, and see if there are things that demand contrition—if we have said or done things for which we should be sorry.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Thursday 25th February
Lent Weekday**



Jesus said: "Ask, and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

How persistent, trusting and loving is our prayer to our Father?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Friday 26th February
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "If your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven."

Today is CAFOD Lent Fast Day: we let our "going without" help others who have no choice. Save some money today, and donate it to CAFOD at Church or online.

Try to pray the Stations of the Cross today

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Saturday 27th February
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. You must be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Is there someone we dislike—at work or school or in our street? Today is a day to pray for them, and even to reach out in kindness in obedience to the command of Jesus.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Sunday 28th February
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**



"In their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them."

We hear how Jesus was transfigured—a promise that after darkness and suffering will come glory and light!

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Monday 1st March
Saint David, Bishop, Patron of
Wales**

Jesus says: "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill top cannot be hidden."

Saint David was a light to the people of Wales, bringing them to Good News. Can we be a light to someone today?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Tuesday 2nd March
Lent Weekday**

Isaiah said "Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow."

What can we do today for the vulnerable or needy in our society?

The Holy Father's Intention for March: that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Wednesday 3rd March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve."

How can we put ourselves at the service of someone else today? Do we always put ourselves first?

Today is World Wildlife Day

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Thursday 4th March
Saint Casimir**

Jesus said: "The rich man said 'If someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent.' Then Abraham said to him, 'If they will not listen either to Moses of the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus: do we take for granted the good things we enjoy? Do we help the poor when we can?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Friday 5th March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone."

As we prepare for Good Friday, we think of the persecution of the prophets, which foreshadows the sufferings of Jesus, and all who are persecuted today.

Today is Women's World Day of Prayer

Try to pray the Stations of the Cross today

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Saturday 6th March
Lent Weekday**

The Psalmist says: "The Lord is compassion and love, it is he who forgives all your guilt."

How often do we examine our lives in the light of the Gospel?



PRAY FAST GIVE

**Sunday 7th March
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**



Jesus said: "Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market!"

In clearing the traders out of the Temple Jesus shows that pure religion must not be contaminated by worldly things. We are the Temple of the Spirit: do we need to clear ourselves out this Lent?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Monday 8th March
Saint John of God, Religious**

The Psalmist says: "My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life."

How hungry are we for God? Do we fill our lives with other things, and become so stuffed that there is no room for God?

Today is International Women's Day

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Tuesday 9th March
Saint Frances of Rome, Religious**

Jesus says: "Forgive your brother from your heart."

Do we hold onto grudges or the memory of past faults and sins? Is there someone that we need to make peace with? Someone we need to forgive?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Wednesday 10th March
Lent Weekday**



Jesus says: "The one who keeps my commandments is great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

What is God asking us to do today? How much do we accept the commandments of God?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Thursday 11th March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

We must be "with Jesus" in all things: today, ask him to guide the different moments of your day.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Friday 12th March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "This is the first commandment—you must love the Lord your God with all your heart. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself."

How do we put these commandments into practice every day?

Try to pray the Stations of the Cross today

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Saturday 13th March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: The tax collector stood some distance away, beat his breast and said 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' This man went home again at rights with God."

How humble are we in our prayers? Do we make demands of God, or trust God's mercy and kindness?

Today is the Anniversary of the Election of Pope Francis

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Sunday 14th March
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
"Laetare Sunday" Mothering Sunday**



Jesus said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."

Today we celebrate the immense love of God revealed in Jesus. Let us love in return.

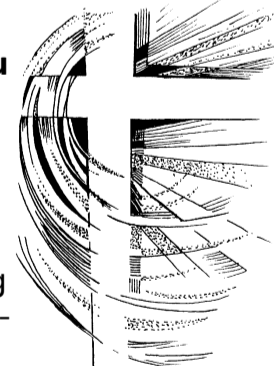
Mothering Sunday: a day when we remember mothers, giving gifts to those living and prayers for those who've died.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Monday 15th March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus says: "You will not believe unless you see signs and portents!"

Do we put God to the test, do we look for signs, or are we willing to trust God completely?



PRAY FAST GIVE

**Tuesday 16th March
Lent Weekday**

The Psalmist says: "The waters of a river give joy to God's city, the holy place where the Most High dwells."

At Easter we celebrate baptism. Give thanks for your baptism today, and think about the difference it makes.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Wednesday 17th March
Saint Patrick, Bishop, Patron of Ireland**

Jesus said: "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest. Start off now, but remember I am sending you out like lambs among wolves."

Despite being taken to Ireland as a slave, Patrick returned to preach the Good News of Jesus. Where might we be asked to take that Good News today?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Thursday 18th March
Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor of the Church**

Jesus said: "The works my Father has given me to carry out, these same works of mine testify that the Father has sent me."

It was by his miracles and acts of kindness that Jesus showed he came from the Father. What acts can we perform today to show our faith?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Friday 19th March
SAINT JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

The Gospel says: "When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do."

Saint Joseph was a good and just man, who put his own life and dreams and wishes in second place in order to help Mary and Jesus. Do we always put ourselves first?

Try to pray the Stations of the Cross today

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Saturday 20th March
Lent Weekday**

"God is the shield that protects me, who saves the upright of heart."

Where do I pin my hopes? On the things of this world or on God?

Today is the International Day of Happiness

Statues and images in Church are veiled this weekend to show that we are getting close to Holy Week.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Sunday 21st March
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**



Jesus said: "Now sentence is being passed on this world; and when I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw all people to myself."

Jesus is willing to do anything to save us: this Sunday think of what he has done for you.

Today is World Poetry Day

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Monday 22nd March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus says: "I am the light of the world."

Are there things in our lives we try to keep in the dark? Are we willing to let Christ shine on every part of our life?

Today is World Water Day

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Tuesday 23rd March
Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo,
Bishop**

Jesus said: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; what the Father has taught me is what I preach."

Jesus surrendered himself to the will of the Father. How much am I willing to surrender for God?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Wednesday 24th March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus says: "I tell you solemnly, everyone who commits sin is a slave."

Jesus wants to set us free: have we got bad habits or routines that hold us back from him and his freedom?



PRAY FAST GIVE

**Thursday 25th March
THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE
LORD**

Jesus said: "God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will."

The cross was not the first sacrifice of Jesus: on this day we celebrate the eternal Word of God sacrificing that eternity to become truly human in the womb of Mary. How can we be like Jesus and Mary, saying "Yes" to God's will for us?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Friday 26th March
Lent Weekday**

Jesus said: "I have done many good works for you to see: for which of these are you stoning me?"

Pride prevents people from seeing the goodness of Jesus—all they can see is a threat. Are we ever threatened by others? Does pride stop us seeing their goodness?

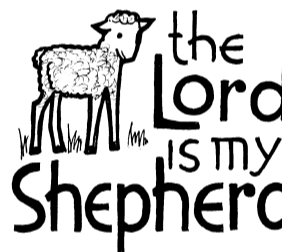
Today is the day of prayer for survivors of sexual abuse

Try to pray the Stations of the Cross today

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Saturday 27th March
Lent Weekday**

The Psalmist says: "The Lord will guard us as a shepherd guards his flock."



Jesus came to gather us together as one family. Are we ever like lost sheep, running away from God?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Sunday 28th March
PALM SUNDAY OF THE
PASSION OF THE LORD**



"Hosanna in the highest heavens!"

Today we begin Holy Week remembering Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. We carry palm branches to show that we acclaim Jesus as our King. We then hear the Passion and Death of Jesus as recorded by Saint Mark.

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Monday 29th March
Monday in Holy Week**

Even if we are at work or on holiday this week, we should do something each day to make it holy! Think about these words today:

"I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right."

What can I do today to serve justice, fairness the cause of right?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Tuesday 30th March
Tuesday in Holy Week**

Make this a holy day by a prayer, an act of kindness or generosity, and a gesture of selflessness or giving up. Reflect on these words:

"I will make you the light to the nations."

How can I be a light to others—friends or strangers—today?

PRAY FAST GIVE

**Wednesday 31st March
Spy Wednesday**

The old name of this day is a reminder of the betrayal of Judas, who arranged to hand Jesus over.

"The Lord is coming to my help, who dares condemn me?"

Lent itself ends today, but tomorrow we enter the Paschal Fast as we walk through the moments of Our Lord's Passion and Death

PRAY FAST GIVE

1st April: MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Church remember the institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood, following Jesus' example of service in the washing of his disciples' feet in the EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

2nd April: GOOD FRIDAY

At 3.00 p.m. in the afternoon, the hour of his death, the Church assembles to hear the story of the Passion and to venerate the cross in the SOLEMN COMMEMORATION OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

3rd April: HOLY SATURDAY

After the emptiness of Holy Saturday, when night falls the Church kindles fire, reflects on the Scriptures, blesses water and proclaims the Resurrection of the Lord in the great EASTER VIGIL: baptisms take place and baptismal promises are renewed.

4th April EASTER SUNDAY

The Church joyfully celebrates the MASS OF THE RESURRECTION with the Renewal of Baptism Promises.