

Aspects of Lent: Fasting

Today's Gospel tells us that, after His baptism, our Lord went out into the desert and fasted there for forty days. He gives us a model of how we are to live Lent, a season in which fasting plays a crucial role. But what is fasting, and why do it?

Fasting usually refers to cutting back significantly on food. This could mean taking smaller meals, or missing a meal altogether. Denying ourselves some food reminds us that we "do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3). It shows our solidarity with those who do not have enough to eat, and helps us to remember them in our thoughts, prayers and charitable giving. Our hunger reminds us that we should "hunger and thirst for what is right" (Matthew 5:6). There are also other ways of fasting: denying ourselves something we will really miss, but don't really need – some people, for example, turn off the TV or avoid the internet for Lent. Giving up anything that we will really miss is a kind of fast.

And so in Lent we forego some of the things that keep us content or give us pleasure. In the church, the music is usually more subdued, there are no flowers, and we 'fast' from using the word "Alleluia". At home, too, we can allow life to be a little more subdued and try to reduce the number of distractions, so that we enter more fully into the wilderness with our Lord. All of this helps us to create some space for God, so that we, like Jesus, may resist all temptations that come our way, and live more fully for the Lord and for one another.

Today's Readings

The first and second readings point us to baptism, through which sin is washed away and we are brought into relationship (covenant) with God. St Peter tells us that Noah's ark, whose story appears in the first reading, was an image teaching us how we are saved by baptism. The Gospel, as always for the first Sunday of Lent, invites us to enter into the wilderness with our Lord (see above).

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MASSES THIS WEEK

Office: Psalter week 1; Sundays: year B; Weekdays: of Lent

Morning Mass is livestreamed each day and will be available for viewing later in the day on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/StClaresChurch>

Date	Time	Occasion	Intention/Details
Saturday	6pm (vigil)*	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT	May & Bill Hargreaves RIP
Sunday 21 st	9:30am*		Frank RIP & Anne Machin
	11:30am*		Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue RIP
	6pm*		People of the Parish
Monday	9:30am	Chair of St Peter	James Banks RIP
Tuesday	9:30am		Joan Burton RIP
Wednesday	9:30am		Barry Worden RIP
Thursday	9:30am		Liz O'Donnell RIP
Friday	9:30am		Michael and Margaret Holleran RIP
Saturday	9:30am	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT	Bernard A. Harrison RIP
	6pm (vigil)*		John Airey RIP
Sunday 28 th	9:30am*		People of the Parish
	11:30am*		George Oldcorn RIP
	6pm*	Peter Lowe RIP	

* These Masses can only be attended by those who have booked in advance.

LATELY DEAD: Please pray for all who have died recently.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Friday 5-6pm, Saturday 11am-12noon and on request.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Sundays in Lent 3pm in church and live on YouTube.

ROSARY: Prayed after 9:30am Mass, Monday-Friday.

ANNIVERSARIES: Maria Jakimovicz, Jack Bennett, Margaret Thelma Gavell, George Henry Green, Bill Walmsley, Anne Lovell, Norma Douds, Edwin Smith, Isabella Main, Joe McCallion, John Kirk.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR FEBRUARY: We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

EXPLORING THE SAN DAMIANO CROSS: Find out more about the history and symbolism of the cross which hangs above our altar, in a new video out now on our YouTube channel, for the beginning of Lent.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Sunday afternoons, 3pm in church and live on YouTube. A chance to journey with our Lord on His walk to calvary. This replaces the normal Sunday opening for private prayer.

CONFESSIONS will also be available this Friday, 5-6pm, as well as on Saturday.

PHILIPPA AND KEITH MILLER have recently moved out of the parish after almost 30 years here. We wish them every blessing for the future. Philippa has asked us to share her contact details: howdymum@yahoo.co.uk; 07962 656855.

CAFOD BIG WALK FOR WATER: Water is the theme of this year's Lent Fast Day, which is this coming Friday. In addition to the normal Fast Day collection, CAFOD asks us all to do a "Big Walk for Water" on 20 February, individually or in COVID bubbles, seeking sponsors and/or making personal donations. Anyone who would like to pledge to do 10,000 COVID-secure steps every day during Lent is asked to contact stephen.garsed@gmail.com or ring 717376 for further details. **Fast Day envelopes** are available this weekend.

LENT CALENDARS: A couple of online calendars with ideas for Lent:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Lent-calendar>; <https://laudatosilent.org/>

ACN VIRTUAL SUNDAY LUNCH: 21st March. More details to follow. Find out more about the work of Aid to the Church in Need and support them at www.acnuk.org

CTS LENT READING: Pick up some good reading for Lent (physical books or ebooks) from the Catholic Truth Society: <https://www.ctsbooks.org/>

ABORTION CONSULTATION: The UK Government has temporarily allowed home abortions. Since then, as reported extensively in the media, a number of significant problems have put the lives and health of many women in danger. The UK Government has launched a consultation on whether to make permanent the current temporary arrangement allowing 'DIY' home abortions. The consequences of this measure would be devastating to the care and protection of both unborn babies and their mothers. It is vital that as many people as possible take part to ensure the voices of the most vulnerable are heard. There is a simple tool to respond to this consultation, prepared by Right to Life UK. It only takes 2 minutes! The deadline is this Friday evening. Click the link here to take part: <https://righttolife.org.uk/ukconsultation> Please make your voice heard and stand up for those who are most vulnerable.

CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS are available to order by subscription, directly from the publisher at discounted rates (www.thecatholicuniverse.com or 0161 820 5722).

Events this week (occasional/one-off events in bold type)

Day	Time	What?	Where?
Every day	Anytime	Food Bank Collection	House Porch
Sunday 21 st	3pm	Stations of the Cross	Church and YouTube
Mon-Fri	5-6pm	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Church
Saturday	11am-12	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Church
Sunday 21 st	3pm	Stations of the Cross	Church and YouTube

A prayer of spiritual communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Lancaster Diocese Youth Service during lockdown

Our diocesan youth service, based at Castlerigg Manor, is organising various online during the lockdown Please pass the details on to anyone who may benefit.

RISE // Online Youth Group - Our first online Youth Group launches on March 11th. It's free of charge and open to anyone in Years 7 to 9. Every other Thursday from 7pm to 8pm. www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/riseonline

Online Study Days for Adults - Our first study day will be on Saturday March 13th. Father Michael Docherty will be talking to us about Salvation History. Tickets £5. 1pm to 5pm. www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/study

Overflow (Online Group for 18-30s) // Connecting young adults. [Sign up...](#)

Youth Mental Health First Aid (online) // We are offering a HUGE reduction on our normal price. Tickets are just £95, for this two day course accredited by MHFA England. Your chance to learn how to spot the warning signs of poor mental health and how you can help. The Mental Health equivalent of learning CPR! [Book...](#)

ENGAGE // Online Youth Ministry Course - The second run of the ENGAGE course starts on March 16th. The course is aimed at people starting out in Youth Ministry or people who've been around a while and want to learn a little more. Earlybird price £48 until February 10th. www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/engage