
Aspects of Lent: Almsgiving

Alongside prayer and fasting, almsgiving is a key element of Lent. It's an opportunity to give generously to those in need. This may involve giving money to charity, leaving donations for the food bank, or giving time to someone in need. Any way in which we give of ourselves or of what we have to help others is a form of almsgiving. Like prayer and fasting, it's an essential element of Christian life throughout the year, but Lent highlights this need for us.

Why do we do it? At the simplest level, it's for two reasons: firstly, because the Lord commands it: "I was hungry and you gave me food, naked and you clothed me..."; secondly, because it's an act of love for our brothers and sisters. But beyond these, it also benefits us too. The act of giving frees us from undue attachment to possessions or to our own comfort; it enables us to become less selfish, to live more for love. So almsgiving benefits the recipient, but undoubtedly also benefits the giver too.

The season of Lent is a time of grace to help us to become more Christ-like. In giving, we become more like Him, who gave Himself completely for the salvation of the world. He held nothing back: His whole life was a gift to humanity, an act of generosity on the part of God, to give us a salvation we did not deserve. In our acts of charity, let's hold before us the charity of the cross, the unbounded self-giving of our Lord. If we do so, we shall give generously, and grow in love.

Today's Readings

We hear today the Exodus account of the Ten Commandments, in which God lays out for His people the basic rules for life. These commandments, perfectly fulfilled by Jesus, guide us to follow the Lord, but more is needed. St Paul sees in Christ's cross the apparent weakness of God, which in fact is the strength of His love, poured out in self-giving for us. The Lord shows us how to live the rules but also to go beyond them, to live in such a way as to mirror divine love in our world.

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MASSES THIS WEEK

Office: Psalter week 3; 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)*	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT	Peter Sissons RIP
Sunday 7 th	9:30am*		Roger and Florence O'Donnell RIP
	11:30am*		PJ and Nuala Gordon RIP
	6pm*		People of the Parish
Monday	9:30am		Jonathan (sick)
Tuesday	9:30am		Susan and Charles Gordon RIP
Wednesday	9:30am		Vincent Riley RIP
Thursday	9:30am		Francis Harrison RIP
Friday	9:30am		Theresa and John Topping RIP
Saturday	9:30am	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT	Ints Gerald Topping
	6pm (vigil)*		Tom McAuley Sr
Sunday 14 th	9:30am*		Stella Shore RIP
	11:30am*		People of the Parish
	6pm*	Peter Dewhurst 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: Wednesday 5-6pm this week, 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: Jack Farnworth, Elizabeth Duffy, Ted Boulton, Mary Hickson, Joseph Moss, Violet Donnelly, Ron Smith, Louise Marie Ross, Constance Ashcroft.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR MARCH: That we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

THE PASSION NARRATIVE IN ST MARK: An online talk exploring St Mark's account of Our Lord's suffering and death. Live on our YouTube channel this Tuesday (9th March) at 7:30pm.

NOVENA TO ST JOSEPH: From Wednesday, we'll pray a novena leading up to St Joseph's feast day (19th March). This will be immediately after Mass Mon-Sat mornings and after Stations on Sunday afternoons. More info on back page.

CAN YOU HELP IN HOLY WEEK? Please let us know if you can act as a steward for Palm Sunday morning, Good Friday afternoon, Easter Sunday morning, or for opening for private prayer on Maundy Thursday evening. Altar servers, please also let us know at which services in Holy Week you will be able to assist.

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 be available this Wednesday, 5-6pm, as well as on Saturday.

EASTER FLOWERS: Donations are welcome, in marked envelopes. Please include the name(s) of anyone you wish to be remember. A list of names will be displayed.

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, made this year for Lent.

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

CATHOLIC VOICE OF LANCASTER March edition now available in the newsletters section of our website. Includes tributes to Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue.

CAFOD LENT APPEAL: CAFOD have set up a JustGiving page for our parish. You can find it here: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/st-clares-lent-walkforwater>

LENT CALENDARS: A couple of online calendars with ideas for Lent: <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Lent-calendar>; <https://laudatosilent.org/>

RWANDA TRUST: The Rwanda Group Trust, a registered & local Catholic charity based in Preston, helps the poorest of the poor in Rwanda. The situation is very serious due to Covid-19 and serious food shortages. Every penny raised in the Lenten appeal will enable families to purchase food and goats. The charity has no paid employees or overheads. Goats cost £30 to purchase in Rwanda. For further information, or to donate, see: www.rwandagrouptrust.blogspot.com; or email rwandagrouptrust.org@gmail.com; or call Michael Donlan (Trustee) 07864 990941.

FAITH AND JUSTICE JOB VACANCY: The Diocese is looking for a part-time faith and justice co-ordinator. See the poster in the narthex for more details.

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

Day	Time	What?	Where?
Every day	Anytime	Food Bank Collection	House Porch
Sunday 7 th	3pm	Stations of the Cross	Church and YouTube
Mon-Fri	5-6pm	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Church
Tuesday	7:30pm	The Passion Narratives in Mark: online talk	YouTube
Saturday	11am-12	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Church
Sunday 14 th	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.

Novena to St Joseph (Wednesday 10th-Thursday 18th March)

Each day we will pray for a specific intention:

Wednesday 10th: For openness to God's will

Thursday 11th: For families

Friday 12th: For refugees

Saturday 13th: For humility

Sunday 14th: For the Church

Monday 15th: For workers

Tuesday 16th: For the poor

Wednesday 17th: For all those afflicted by the pandemic

Thursday 18th: For a happy death

The **Novena Prayer** is taken from Pope Francis' letter *Patris Corde*:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.

Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.