

## A MESSAGE FOR LENT FROM FR LAWRENCE

Dear Friends,

Lent begins this Wednesday. It is a time of renewal in our spiritual lives. We try to focus more on God and what he wants to do in our lives. It is a retreat for the whole Church. Every member of the Church is invited to participate and experience God's grace at this "favorable time". As the Christian community of St Robert's parish we too are invited to take part. As Lent approaches I want to offer you all a number of opportunities to participate in what we could call a "parish retreat". There will be a variety of initiatives taking place. I urge you to get involved in at least one of them. Here goes:

**Ash Wednesday. Mass and distribution of ashes at 9.30am and 7.00pm.** It is a Day of Fasting and Abstinence.

First of all, I want to mention again the two Bible Courses. There is still time to sign up. ***The Great Adventure – A Quick Journey Through the Bible*** (a 8 week course) begins on Thursday March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm in the parish hall and the course on ***St Matthew's Gospel*** begins on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March. Please sign the registration form at the back of church and put it in the white box.

***The Big Read*** is an ecumenical initiative involving all the Churches in Morpeth. These are small bible sharing groups for Lent. This year they are looking at the Gospel of St Matthew. You will need the book "**Lent for Everyone**" by Bishop Tom Wright. The usual price for the book is £6.99 but you can get it at the Lifestyle Christian Bookshop for just £4.00. The idea is that each group should have people from different Churches. Take a look at the times and venues of the different groups on the back of this sheet. I encourage you to take part.

***"This is My Body, given for you"*** is a series of reflections and discussions on Icons of the Incarnation. It will be led by the new Anglican curate of Morpeth, Rev Tony Curtis. **It will take place every Tuesday during Lent at St James' Church, Copper Chare from 7.30-8.30pm.** For many centuries, Eastern Christians have used the beauty of icons to celebrate and reflect on the mystery of the Word made flesh. Over the course of six Tuesday evenings during Lent, we'll be reflecting on the importance of the Incarnation of Christ using images of Orthodox Icons which depict the life and ministry of Jesus. Each week we will focus on a key event in Christ's life, and starting with an explanation of and reflection upon an icon, we'll explore its significance in revealing to us the mystery of salvation. Everyone is welcome, and there'll be time for questions and to discuss the issues we cover each week. Although the intention is to explore the mystery of the incarnation as we progress through Christ's earthly life over the six weeks, please feel free to come to as few or as many sessions as you are able. Programme: 15th March Introduction, The Nativity of Christ; 22nd March The Presentation in the Temple; 29th March The Baptism of Christ; 5th April The Samaritan Woman at the Well; 12th April The Transfiguration; 19th April The Harrowing of Hell, Conclusion.

There will be **Stations of the Cross every Monday evening at 6.30pm in church. Also, immediately after Mass on Friday mornings.** We will need volunteers to help out with these. You can of course come along and make your own Stations of the Cross during the day. The church is usually open every day from 8.15am to 5.00pm. You will find a pile of different versions of the Stations at the back of church– near the 1<sup>st</sup> Station. Please feel free to use them.

**There will be a simple Lenten Lunch every Friday – soup and a bun – from 12 noon to 1.00pm.** The idea is that the money you save by coming to lunch is donated to CAFOD. It's a wonderful way of combining fasting and almsgiving. We will begin with the Angelus at 12 noon and a CAFOD prayer. We will need volunteers to cook the soup. **The CAFOD Lent Fast Day is on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March.** You can pick up an envelope at the back of church.

Can I also suggest that, if you are able, you make a special effort to come to Mass on a weekday. Also, I want to encourage more people to take part in Morning Prayer (9.00am Monday to Friday). Every Saturday morning there is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 10.30am to 12 noon. Why not take a few minutes out of your shopping schedule to come and spend a few moments in silent prayer before the Lord.

So, there's plenty there to help you take part in this wonderful season of renewal. I wish you are very happy and holy Lent.

Fr Lawrence Jones