

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**When he calls on me, I will answer him;
I will deliver him and give him glory,
I will grant him length of days.**

COLLECT

Grant, almighty God,
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ
and be worthy conduct pursue their effects.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING 9:8-15

A reading from the book of Genesis

God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.'

God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 24

Response:

Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love for those who keep your covenant.

1. Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. (R.)

2. Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.

In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord. (R.)

3. The Lord is good and upright.

He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

SECOND READING 3:18-22

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us

to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels of the Dominations and Powers his subjects.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

**Man does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

GOSPEL 1:12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Give us the right dispositions,
O Lord, we pray,
to make these offerings,
for with them we celebrate the beginning
of this venerable and sacred time.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed now with this heavenly bread,
by which faith is nourished, hope increased,
and charity strengthened,
we pray, O Lord,
that we may learn to hunger for Christ,
the true and living Bread,
and strive to live by every word
which proceeds from your mouth.
Through Christ our Lord

GOSPEL REFLECTION



Why do you think Jesus frequently went into the desert to find quiet time to pray?

Where are your desert places, the places you go to withdraw from the world and put your spiritual life in order?

Would your life be richer if you made more special time for God in your life?

How do you go about finding personal prayer time during the week?

How much attention do you really pay to your spiritual needs? Is a healthy spiritual life a priority for you? Why is it important to pay attention to your spiritual life?

How do you become more aware of God's presence around you? Do you find God in beautiful sunrises and sunsets, quiet afternoons, or a group of children playing in a creek? Where else do you find God?

If you could put aside a regular "desert time" each week to sustain your faith life, what would you do with that time? Might you read and meditate on Scripture during your desert time? Are you comfortable with long quiet times where God can have an opportunity to speak to you?

GOSPEL ACTION

Make a commitment to finding a time and place each week to spend quiet time in prayer. Start using Scripture as a regular part of your prayer time; read a few verses and then listen to God talk to you. Begin to keep a prayer journal.



Readings – 2nd Sunday in Lent Year B

First Reading: Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

Second Reading: Romans 8:31-34

Gospel: Mark 9:2-10



A PASTORAL LETTER

Re-Building on the Foundation of the Eucharist

**To be read at Mass on the First Sunday of Lent, 21st February 2021,
in all churches and chapels of the Diocese**

My dear brothers and sisters,

On this First Sunday of Lent, the story resonates for us, of a family enduring a great trial that engulfed the world they had known. The Book of Genesis recounts how Noah and his family emerged from ‘a state of lockdown’ with renewed hope in God’s saving purpose. The rainbow set against the clouds became a sign of hope for them, as it has become a sign of hope in this health crisis, whether painted by children, posted in windows or projected on public buildings. The rainbow has happily recovered its original meaning as a sign of the promise of the Lord: *“When ... the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature”*.ⁱ Despite all human sinfulness, and the disasters resulting from sin, God’s purpose is always to save and bring us to new life. This is our personal experience every time we make a sincere confession and know the grace of the Holy Spirit sent for the forgiveness of sins.ⁱⁱ

Almost twelve months have passed since I wrote at the start of a pandemic that has impacted every one of our lives. As this Lent begins, we remember in prayer all who have died and more than a hundred thousand families who today mourn the loss of loved ones. We can draw lasting lessons from the suffering of this time and its quiet heroism. Many of these lessons echo the call of Lent to greater prayer, self-denial and generosity. Today, I wish to highlight lessons learnt from the way our parishes rose to challenges, reminiscent of the brave beginnings of this Shrewsbury Diocese. As in those pioneering days, the continued celebration of the Mass – the priority of the Eucharist – has become the focus of so many strenuous and unprecedented efforts. It has also been the aspiration of many who have remained prayerfully at home, often using the internet to stay connected, while anticipating the day of the great return to Holy Mass.

As we face the challenges of emerging from the devastation of a pandemic, let us be ready to re-build the life of the Church on this same foundation of the Eucharist. The Book of Genesis tells how the priority for Noah's family, having barely set foot on dry ground, was to build an altar for the Lord.ⁱⁱⁱ In the same way, our union with Christ in the Mass, in the Sacraments and in daily prayer, must be our own enduring priority. At the Cathedral, the works to renew the Altar have coincided with this time and will stand as a memorial to these days of renewed Eucharistic faith and love. The very restrictions imposed by the pandemic have helped us treasure our churches as places of prayer, silence and personal encounter with Christ. In so many ways we have been led to recognise anew, as the Catechism reminds us that *"In His Eucharistic presence He remains mysteriously in our midst as the One who loved us and gave Himself for us"*.^{iv} It is Jesus Himself who awaits us in the Sacrament of His love.^v

I hope we will continue to make generous efforts in 2021, to keep church doors open wherever this is possible; and ensuring we give of our best in everything connected with the Mass and the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the heart of every one our communities. If Eucharistic love pervades our parishes, then we can be sure nothing will be lacking in our sense of mission.

At the start of my letter, I said we are setting out to re-build on the foundation of the Eucharist. Saint John Paul II put this simply when he said, the Eucharist builds the Church.^{vi} He recalled the teaching the Second Vatican Council which declared, *"As often as the Sacrifice of the Cross ... is celebrated on the altar, the work of redemption is carried out ... and at the same time ... the unity of the faithful, who form one body in Christ, is expressed and brought about"*.^{vii} May this be so for us in 2021, as we gather in ever growing numbers to fulfil Christ's command *"Do this in memory of me"*.^{viii}

May Saint Joseph, to whom we have entrusted this year of recovery, pray for us and accompany us as we grow in Eucharistic love,

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

ⁱ Gen. 9: 14

ⁱⁱ Cf. Rite of Penance

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Gen. 8: 20

^{iv} Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 1380

^v Cf. *Dominicae Cenae* n.3

^{vi} Cf. *Ecclesia De Eucharistia* Chapter 2

^{vii} *Lumen Gentium* n. 3

^{viii} Cf. I Cor. 11: 26

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion

21st February 2021 – 1st Sunday of Lent, Year B

On this first Sunday of Lent we bring all our prayers to God our Father:

For the Church and for Christians everywhere: may they overcome any temptations this Lent and through prayer, fasting and almsgiving draw closer to the Lord. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are finding life difficult during this time of lockdown: may we support and help them through our love and friendship. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all essential workers particularly the doctors and nurses in our hospitals: may they be granted the health and strength that they need as they continue to care for and support their sisters and brothers. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick, especially those suffering from coronavirus; may they know the grace and healing of Jesus the Lord of love and life. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are hungry and the poor in our world; may we be generous in sharing what we have with those who are less fortunate. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For peace in our world and an end to injustice, war, violence and hatred everywhere. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all the faithful departed especially **Ellen Moore**, those who have died from Covid-19 and all those who have died recently: **“Eternal rest grant unto them...”**

For those who mourn the loss of loved ones; may Christ’s message of hope in eternal life bring them comfort and consolation. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask Our Lady and all the Saints to join their prayers with ours as we say: **“Hail Mary...”**

God our loving Father,
we offer these and all our prayers
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion
21st February 2021 – 1st Sunday of Lent, Year B

Spiritual Communion

Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things and
I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.
Amen.

CAFOD Prayer for Glasgow

Creator God,
We cry out to you
The earth is damaged and in chaos
People in poverty are suffering the most
Greed and consumerism are a disease
And your Church is too often asleep

Merciful Lord,
Protect your people and restore your earth,
Embolden governments to take action,
Awaken Church leaders
Give the youth influence
And guide businesses to change

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord
May we unite and be bold
Take heart and find hope in you,
Worship you with our lifestyles
Walk in your truth
and see justice and renewal in the earth

Amen



*Message of His Holiness Pope Francis
for Lent 2021*

*“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem” (Mt 20:18)
Lent: a Time for Renewing Faith, Hope and Love*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus revealed to his disciples the deepest meaning of his mission when he told them of his passion, death and resurrection, in fulfilment of the Father’s will. He then called the disciples to share in this mission for the salvation of the world.

In our Lenten journey towards Easter, let us remember the One who “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (*Phil* 2:8). During this season of conversion, let us renew our *faith*, draw from the “living water” of *hope*, and receive with open hearts the *love* of God, who makes us brothers and sisters in Christ. At the Easter vigil, we will renew our baptismal promises and experience rebirth as new men and women by the working of the Holy Spirit. This Lenten journey, like the entire pilgrimage of the Christian life, is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes and decisions of the followers of Christ.

Fasting, prayer and almsgiving, as preached by Jesus (cf. *Mt* 6:1-18), enable and express our conversion. The path of poverty and self-denial (*fasting*), concern and loving care for the poor (*almsgiving*), and childlike dialogue with the Father (*prayer*) make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope and effective charity.

1. *Faith calls us to accept the truth and testify to it before God and all our brothers and sisters.*

In this Lenten season, *accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ* means, first of all, opening our hearts to God’s word, which the Church passes on from generation to generation. This truth is not an abstract concept reserved for a chosen intelligent few. Instead, it is a message that all of us can receive and understand thanks to the wisdom of a heart open to the grandeur of God, who loves us even before we are aware of it. Christ himself is this truth. By taking on our humanity, even to its very limits, he has made himself the way – demanding, yet open to all – that leads to the fullness of life.

Fasting, experienced as a form of self-denial, helps those who undertake it in simplicity of heart to rediscover God’s gift and to recognize that, created in his

image and likeness, we find our fulfilment in him. In embracing the experience of poverty, those who fast make themselves poor with the poor and accumulate the treasure of a love both received and shared. In this way, fasting helps us to love God and our neighbour, inasmuch as love, as Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches, is a movement outwards that focuses our attention on others and considers them as one with ourselves (cf. *Fratelli Tutti*, 93).

Lent is a time for believing, for welcoming God into our lives and allowing him to “make his dwelling” among us (cf. *Jn* 14:23). Fasting involves being freed from all that weighs us down – like consumerism or an excess of information, whether true or false – in order to open the doors of our hearts to the One who comes to us, poor in all things, yet “full of grace and truth” (*Jn* 1:14): the Son of God our Saviour.

2. *Hope as “living water” enabling us to continue our journey.*

The Samaritan woman at the well, whom Jesus asks for a drink, does not understand what he means when he says that he can offer her “living water” (*Jn* 4:10). Naturally, she thinks that he is referring to material water, but Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit whom he will give in abundance through the paschal mystery, bestowing a hope that does not disappoint. Jesus had already spoken of this hope when, in telling of his passion and death, he said that he would “be raised on the third day” (*Mt* 20:19). Jesus was speaking of the future opened up by the Father’s mercy. Hoping with him and because of him means believing that history does not end with our mistakes, our violence and injustice, or the sin that crucifies Love. It means receiving from his open heart the Father’s forgiveness.

In these times of trouble, when everything seems fragile and uncertain, it may appear challenging to speak of hope. Yet Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God who patiently continues to care for his creation which we have often mistreated (cf. *Laudato Si’*, 32-33; 43-44). Saint Paul urges us to place our hope in reconciliation: “Be reconciled to God” (*2 Cor* 5:20). By receiving forgiveness in the sacrament that lies at the heart of our process of conversion, we in turn can spread forgiveness to others. Having received forgiveness ourselves, we can offer it through our willingness to enter into attentive dialogue with others and to give comfort to those experiencing sorrow and pain. God’s forgiveness, offered also through our words and actions, enables us to experience an Easter of fraternity.

In Lent, may we be increasingly concerned with “speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement, and not words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 223). In order to give hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, to be “willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference” (*ibid.*, 224).

Through recollection and silent prayer, hope is given to us as inspiration and interior light, illuminating the challenges and choices we face in our mission. Hence the need to pray (cf. *Mt* 6:6) and, in secret, to encounter the Father of tender love.

To experience Lent in hope entails growing in the realization that, in Jesus Christ, we are witnesses of new times, in which God is “making all things new” (cf. *Rev* 21:1-6). It means receiving the hope of Christ, who gave his life on the cross

and was raised by God on the third day, and always being “prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls [us] to account for the hope that is in [us]” (1 Pet 3:15).

3. *Love, following in the footsteps of Christ, in concern and compassion for all, is the highest expression of our faith and hope.*

Love rejoices in seeing others grow. Hence it suffers when others are anguished, lonely, sick, homeless, despised or in need. Love is a leap of the heart; it brings us out of ourselves and creates bonds of sharing and communion.

“‘Social love’ makes it possible to advance towards a civilization of love, to which all of us can feel called. With its impulse to universality, love is capable of building a new world. No mere sentiment, it is the best means of discovering effective paths of development for everyone” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 183).

Love is a gift that gives meaning to our lives. It enables us to view those in need as members of our own family, as friends, brothers or sisters. A small amount, if given with love, never ends, but becomes a source of life and happiness. Such was the case with the jar of meal and jug of oil of the widow of Zarephath, who offered a cake of bread to the prophet Elijah (cf. 1 Kings 17:7-16); it was also the case with the loaves blessed, broken and given by Jesus to the disciples to distribute to the crowd (cf. Mk 6:30-44). Such is the case too with our almsgiving, whether small or large, when offered with joy and simplicity.

To experience Lent with love means caring for those who suffer or feel abandoned and fearful because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In these days of deep uncertainty about the future, let us keep in mind the Lord’s word to his Servant, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you” (Is 43:1). In our charity, may we speak words of reassurance and help others to realize that God loves them as sons and daughters.

“Only a gaze transformed by charity can enable the dignity of others to be recognized and, as a consequence, the poor to be acknowledged and valued in their dignity, respected in their identity and culture, and thus truly integrated into society” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 187).

Dear brothers and sisters, every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping and loving. The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father.

May Mary, Mother of the Saviour, ever faithful at the foot of the cross and in the heart of the Church, sustain us with her loving presence. May the blessing of the risen Lord accompany all of us on our journey towards the light of Easter.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 11 November 2020, the Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours

FRANCISCUS