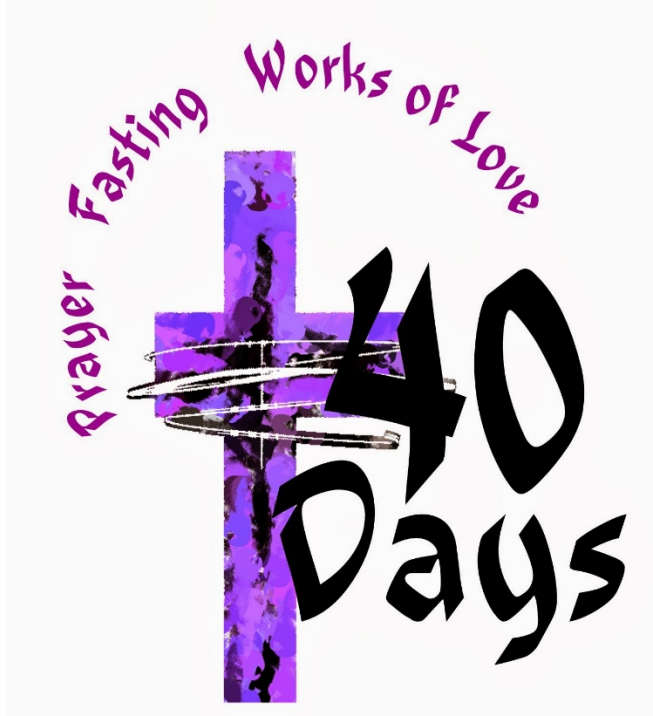


ST MARY THE VIRGIN & ALL SOULS, BULWELL



40 DAYS & 40 WAYS Daily Reflections and Responses for Lent

by Fr Andrew Fisher

40 DAYS & 40 WAYS: DAILY REFLECTIONS & RESPONSES FOR LENT

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. 'Lent' is an old English word meaning 'to lengthen' - Lent is observed in spring, when the days begin to get longer and brighter.

By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is a time when, traditionally, Christians give something up (fasting/abstinence) and give alms (gifts of money to charitable causes). It is also a time for time for drawing closer to God in prayer, Bible study, and worship – hence this booklet.

Following are a series of Bible passages which you are invited to read prayerfully and to reflect on. After that, for each passage is a suggested response, drawing on the theme of the reading, because as St James put it, "faith without works is dead" (James 2: 26).

Traditionally, the Western Church does not include Sundays when calculating Lent, as Sunday is always the day celebrating Christ's resurrection, but I have included readings and responses for the Sundays of Lent for the sake of completeness.

As you read and respond over this special time in the Church's year, may I wish you a fruitful Lent.

Every blessing,

Fr Andrew



1. **ASH WEDNESDAY**

Read & Reflect: 2 Corinthians 5:19-6:2

Respond: Plan 3 things for Lent: one a daily practice of prayer, another giving up a luxury, a third taking up a good work.

2. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 9:22-25

Respond: Resolve to stick to the little discomforts you have taken on for Lent.

3. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 9:14-15

Respond: Bring the joy of the wedding feast to all those around you.

4. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 5:27-32

Respond: Is there anyone you write off or despise? Start healing this.

5. **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

Read & Reflect: Genesis 9:8-15

Respond: Give some of your leisure time to bringing the Kingdom of God into reality.

6. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 25:31-46

Respond: Be especially aware, day by day, of the hungry, the thirsty, a stranger, those lacking clothes, the sick, or those in prison. Who can you help today?

7. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 6:7-15

Respond: Visit a church and offer silent prayer around the concept of 'Father'.

8. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 11:29-32

Respond: Today is a time for repentance and a serious movement of conversion.

9. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 7:7-12

Respond: Seek out a needy person who needs the emotional or material support which you most value yourself – offer either affection or material help.

10. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 5:20-26

Respond: Put aside a special offering towards Church funds. Then, forget everything else about Lent today, and go and be reconciled to an estranged family member.

11. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 5:43-48

Respond: Encourage and nurture someone in their faith; show God's love and action at work.

12. **SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**

Read & Reflect: Genesis 22:1-18

Respond: Make a special fuss of your family and friends, as though you had narrowly escaped from sacrificing them!

13. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 6:36-38

Respond: Is there anyone whom you need to forgive, to be merciful towards as you Father is merciful?

14. **Read & Reflect:** Isaiah 1:10-20

Respond: Gather up some superfluous clothes, books etc and think of who could benefit from them.

15. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 20: 27-28

Respond: Is there anybody in Church or whom you know who is sick or housebound and would be enlivened by a visit – better still with a little present?

16. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 16: 19-31

Respond: Is there anyone you could help who is going through a difficult time, or to whom you could give something that shows that you care?

17. **Read & Reflect:** Genesis 37:3-28.

Respond: Take the amazing grace and love of God to someone today.

18. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 15:1-32
Respond: Would a small gift or token nourish the love between yourself and someone with whom you have recently fallen out with?
19. **THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**
Read & Reflect: John 2: 13-25
Respond: Make a special act of worship or reverence to express that the Church is the dwelling of God.
20. **Read & Reflect:** John 3:14-21
Respond: You are halfway through 40 Days & 40 Ways, so rejoice! And be sure to share your joy with somebody else.
21. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 18:21-35
Respond: Forgiveness is best cemented by a gratuitous extra act of kindness – just to show for sure that you mean it.
22. **Read & Reflect:** Deuteronomy 4: 1-9
Respond: Share with someone else something you value, as a sign that everything we have of value is a gift from God.
23. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 11:14-23
Respond: Spend some time in prayer about an encounter with Jesus. What would He say to you, and you to Him?
24. **Read & Reflect:** Matthew 12: 28-34
Respond: Invite for a cup of tea or coffee a lonely person, or someone who has suffered a recent bereavement.
25. **Read & Reflect:** Hosea 5: 15- 6:6
Respond: Read the whole prophecy of Hosea and treasure the relationship between God and His people, Israel, which he longs to renew.
26. **FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**
Read & Reflect: 2 Kings 5: 1-15
Respond: As Naaman washed in the Jordan, is there anything you could do for a hampered neighbour – something like washing?!
27. **Read & Reflect:** Isaiah 65:17-21
Respond: What could you do to bring new life, new hope, to someone suffering from depression?
28. **Read & Reflect:** John 5: 1-16
Respond: Go into church, take the Holy Water and make the Sign of the Cross as a reminder of your Baptism.
29. **Read & Reflect:** John 5: 17-30
Respond: Honour equally the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit by praying the 'Glory be...' a few times in the course of the day.
30. **Read & Reflect:** John 5: 31-47
Respond: Is your way of life such that you really are a witness to the love of God made visible in Jesus Christ? Reflect on factors for 'Yes' and 'No'.
31. **Read & Reflect:** John 7:1-30
Respond: Do something to alleviate the suffering of a sick person near you.
32. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 5:1-11
Respond: Examine your conscience as Easter approaches (perhaps go to Confession/receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation)
33. **FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**
Read & Reflect: John 12:20-33
Respond: What is the hardest decision you have recently made in obedience to God? Thank God for it!
34. **Read & Reflect:** Luke 2: 41-52
Respond: Do something for a mother!
35. **Read & Reflect:** John 8: 21-30
Respond: Put a flower or other symbol of honour and attentiveness before a statue of the Lord Jesus.

36. **Read & Reflect:** John 8: 31-42
Respond: Read Romans chapter 8 and reflect on the freedom of the Spirit.
37. **Read & Reflect:** John 8:51-59
Respond: If you died today, what might be the chief blockages of you entering into Christ's glory? What are you doing about it?
38. **Read & Reflect:** John 10: 31-42
Respond: Is there anyone who could think that you were persecuting him/her? How could you dispel that illusion?
39. **Read & Reflect:** John 11:45-56
Respond: Jesus was unfairly condemned. Do you need to revise any judgements you have made about others, and even set about making reparation?
40. **HOLY WEEK – PASSION SUNDAY**
Read & Reflect: Mark 14:1 – 15:47
Respond: Finally resolve to give up one bad habit.
41. **Read & Reflect:** John 12: 1-11
Respond: What special honour can you pay to Jesus as you prepare to commemorate his Passion, death and Resurrection?
42. **Read & Reflect:** John 13:21-38
Respond: Is your loyalty any better than that of the disciples?
43. **SPY WEDNESDAY**
Read & Reflect: Matthew 26:14-25
Respond: Prepare yourself for Easter; really looking at your driving motives, the darker as well as the lighter spots in life.
44. **MAUNDY THURSDAY**
Read & Reflect: John 13: 1-15
Respond: Perform an act of service that will be appreciated by some member of the community.

45. **GOOD FRIDAY**
Read & Reflect: John 18: 1 – 19:42
Respond: Spend some time in prayer of gratitude to Jesus for giving His life for you.
46. **HOLY SATURDAY**
Read & Reflect: Romans 6:3-11
Respond: Prepare for the Easter Renewal of Baptismal Vows by considering what a renewal of life in Christ should involve.
47. **EASTER SUNDAY**
Read & Reflect: John 20:1-9
Respond: Bring Easter joy to at least three people!

