

Spirit of the Season

late Lent 2002

Liturgical Year A

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Death & New Life

Lent walks hand in hand with **Easter**. The two cannot be separated if we are to make sense of the seasons. To begin Lent is to know of Easter and the hope it promises. It is for a good reason that the season of Lent is known as “**this joyful season**”.

Father, all-powerful
and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere
to give you thanks
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Each year you give us
this joyful season
when we prepare to celebrate
the paschal mystery
with mind and heart renewed.

You give us a spirit of loving
reverence for you, our Father,
and of willing service
to our neighbour.

As we recall the great events
that gave us new life in Christ,
you bring the image of your Son
to perfection within us.

(Preface for Lent I)

Spirit of the Season is a publication from the **Liturgy Office** which is aimed at putting accessible liturgical information into the hands of teachers and others involved in **education** and **formation**. It is available on the www at the above address. You are free to **photocopy it** for a wider distribution. Please let us know what you think of **Spirit of the Season**, good or bad, it really helps.



Death fills our TV screens. If it is not the news, it is the latest drama or murder-mystery. Have we become immune to its power? Has death lost its sting?

Death and life are still mysteries

to us; they can fill us with fear and wonder.

Yet we know that a single candle can light a church at the Easter Vigil. We know that buds will turn into blossom with the warmer weather. We enter Lent knowing the end of the story; we celebrate Good Friday because of Easter Sunday. We can face death only in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection

GETTING IN TOUCH

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Entering into the *Joyful Season* that is *Lent*

taking a fresh look at traditional practice
PRAYER — FASTING — ALMSGIVING
opportunities to grow as a class



PRAYER

It can be difficult to introduce Lenten prayer into the classroom situation if the only experience is of prayer before lunch! You may choose not to focus on improvements in class prayer this Lent and look at the other two traditional practices.

An interesting idea might be to bring visitors into the prayer of the class. What about asking the headteacher to join the class maybe once during the season? There is likely to be numerous parents and guardians who will want to jump at the chance of being present for prayer - however short. On the next page you will find a prayer for Lent - well it is a Psalm really - number 129 (130). You will also find a meal prayer that could be used



FASTING

Even among small children the spirit of fasting can be kept. One idea would be not having treats between the meals, another might be skipping many forms of entertainment. The big question asked will be 'but why?' St John Chrysostom called fasting a "medicine." It is meant to make us healthy in body and mind. Hunger, so Jesus tells us in a parable, brought the prodigal

son to his senses. For this medicine to be effective, religious tradition insists that fasting be joined by prayer and almsgiving.

ALMSGIVING

How and where will you gather gifts of charity—alms—during Lent? Who will receive your gifts? For many it will involve possibly CAFOD or the needs of your own diocesan care agencies. Piggy banks originated as alms boxes, a visual reminder of Lent's fast. It would be opened on Holy Thursday and the monies brought to church. To this day the procession with gifts on Holy Thursday evening should include, according to the Missal, gifts for the poor'.



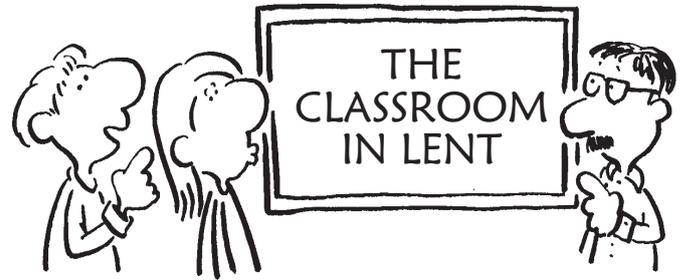
A Psalm for late Lent

Psalm 129 (130)

LEADER Behold! Now is the acceptable time!
ALL Now is the day of salvation!
LEADER From a sea of troubles,
I call out to you, Lord.
ALL Won't you please listen
as I beg for mercy?
SIDE B If you kept a record of our sins,
no one could last long.
SIDE A But you forgive us,
and so we will worship you.
SIDE B With all my heart,
I am waiting, Lord, for you!
I trust your promises.
SIDE A I wait for you more eagerly
than a soldier on guard duty
waits for the dawn.
SIDE B Israel, trust the Lord!
He is always merciful.
SIDE A Israel, the Lord will save you
from all your sins.
LEADER From a sea of troubles,
I call out to you, Lord.
ALL Won't you please listen
as I beg for mercy?
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be,
world without end. AMEN.

A Lent Meal Prayer

LEADER Let us offer God praise
and thanksgiving:
ALL *make the sign of the cross*
LEADER Behold! Now is the acceptable time!
ALL Now is the day of salvation!
LEADER Blessed are you, Lord,
God of all creation:
ALL You make us hunger
and thirst for holiness.
LEADER Blessed are you, Lord,
God of all creation:
ALL You call us to true fasting:
to set free the oppressed,
to share our bread with the hungry,
and to shelter the homeless.
LEADER May your gifts refresh us, O Lord,
and your grace give us strength.
ALL *make the sign of the cross*



LENT means spring and the challenge will be to capture a sense of the season without looking to much like Easter. A small flowery foretaste of Easter amid the trappings of Lent can only help to move our minds forward to the Great Season.



Flowering bulbs - which should be available now — put next to long dry branches with earthy and violet fabrics will make quite a statement.

A cross made of live but dormant twigs will gently come back to life in the warmth. Red Dogwood which is pruned now will be quite stunning.

The regular Lenten images should always find a place in your prayer space: The Word of God, a pot of ashes (do you use the same container that will hold the Easter waters in?) If your prayer space has 'saints' in it, you might consider removing them for the rest of the season to joyfully return at Easter.

Music & Resources for the Season...

'We remember, we celebrate, we believe,' is the last line of a song refrain by Marty Haugen. The whole refrain has been used in the past as an Acclamation in Children's Eucharistic Prayers:

*We remember how you loved us to your death,
and still we celebrate, for you are with us here;
and we believe that we will see you
when you come in your glory, Lord.
We remember, we celebrate, we believe.*

Marty Haugen used the melody of this refrain as the basis of a complete Mass setting: **Mass of Remembrance** (GIA—Decani Music 01638 716 579). Bernadette Farrell's collection of music for children **Share the Light** contains a similar song: Jesus, we remember you (OCP— from Decani).

The psalm and prayer opposite come from **Children's Daily Prayer** an annual resource of daily classroom prayers with roots in the Liturgy of the Hours. Though based on the US school year—starting mid-August—there is far more that is usable in an English and Welsh context than not (LTP—McCrimmons 01702 218 956)

A singable musical setting of Ps 129 is **Out of the Depths** (a more familiar version of the first line) by Scott Soper. It can be found in Laudate.



Bits for Lent!

A Prayer for Young People

God ever just,
you hear the cry of the poor;
you break the power of oppression
and set the downtrodden free.

Change indifference to compassion,
and let the desires of
those with abundance
make place for the needs
of those who are poor.

Turn our hearts
to the way of the gospel,
that peace may triumph
over discord
and our justice mirror your own.



Enjoy yourself this Lent!
*Remember what Jesus said
about not putting on a sad
face during time of fasting and
penance (Matthew 6;16-18).*

*Lent is a time to be joyful as we
remember the mercy and love
of God.*

SOMETHING FOR YOU

In celebrating the Paschal Mystery this Lent and Easter, we will recall how God's people journeyed through waters, deserts and enemies to the Promised Land, inspired by their encounter with Yahweh at Sinai and sustained by the food and drink he supplied. We may remember, too, how Elijah journeyed forty days and nights to Horeb, to his encounter with God, sustained by food and drink supplied by the Lord.

Each of us can make Lent and Easter a journey from

one place to another. In liturgical terms through the actions and rituals of the seasons. In personal terms changing our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.

***we are supported,
sustained, inspired
and carried forward...***

The Christian life, both of individuals and of the Church, is understood in the Scriptures and again in the teaching of Vatican II, as a journey or pilgrimage to the Kingdom. We journey not alone as individual explorers, but in a caravan, as a community on the move,

sharing a common journey in faith and discovery.

Like the people of God of old, like the Easter disciples, at each stage along the way we are supported, sustained, inspired and carried forward by nourishment, presence and fellowship, not just of the community of the Church but of the Risen Lord present and active in that pilgrim company. This sustaining presence, and our encounters with it, are ritualised and experienced in celebrations of the Church which we know as sacraments.

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