

A Spring in our Step

With Easter being particularly early this year, we are already looking ahead to the greatest festival of the Church. Between now and then, however, following the last feast of the revelation at Candlemas, we move back into penitential purple for Ash Wednesday and the forty days of Lent.

So early in the calendar year, it perhaps seems especially unlikely to recall that the word 'lent' originates in 'lencten', the Old English word for 'spring', suggesting the lengthening of the days, and growth; but so it is. That bit of etymology reminds us of the way Christianity has been embedded in the seasons and the activity of our ordinary lives: it is not something only for the religious specialist. It reminds us also that our own Lenten discipline is not undertaken to make ourselves unhappy but as a means to growth, to making ourselves longer in Christ, as it were. Through the attempt to echo Our Lord's forty days in the wilderness, we can hope to shape

our own minds and hearts more nearly to the will of the Father.

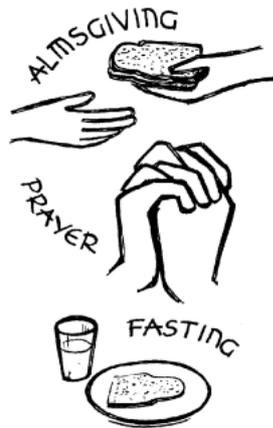
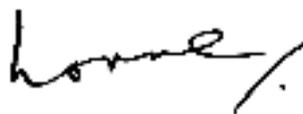
Lenten abstinence from at least the excesses of material indulgence should help us to concentrate more clearly on what matters as servants and children of the God of Love. And provided that we don't irritate with

ostentation, it must be good for people to see something of our commitment.

Our 'abstinence for growth' should inspire us also to greater work for the Lord. Three suggestions seem fitting: a little extra private prayer or spiritual reading,

participation in a parish Lent group, and the regular putting aside of some extra money for a cause such as U.S.P.G. or the Tsunami disaster appeal.

So let us examine our consciences and raise at least our spiritual fitness so that we can pass through Lent with a spring in our step.



Chronicle

Ministry of Healing

*A monthly service on the first Tuesday of the month,
alternating between St James and Sr Francis Churches*

Healing Services:

Tuesday 8th February 7.30 pm

St James Church

Tuesday 1st March 7.30 pm

St Francis Church

The ministry of healing is available at St James' Church every Sunday during the 10 o'clock service. Please go to St Luke's Chapel after you have received Communion where members of the Healing Team will be available to listen and to pray in complete confidence.



two or three days, but by the fourth century, people were encouraged to fast for the full 40 days.

The precise nature of this 'fasting' varied. In general, the western church understood 'fasting' as a reduced intake of food, and eating fish rather than meat. It encouraged Christians to spend time in devotional reading or attendance at church rather than fasting.

But what about the length of Lent? The numerically able reader will have worked out by now that the period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day is actually 46 days. So why not the 40 days that Jesus fasted?

Again, we go back to early church tradition. In the early Church, every Sunday was regarded as a celebration of the resurrection of Christ. So fasting was forbidden on a Sunday! So the period of 46 days thus consists of 40 days of fasting, plus the six Sundays which fall between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day.

Finally, just before Ash Wednesday, we have Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Tuesday. This custom comes from the many thousands of Christian housewives down the centuries who cleared out their larders immediately before the fast of Lent. The simplest way of using up all their eggs, flour and milk was to make pancakes. In some countries the day is known as Mardi Gras, and is marked by major carnivals, most famously in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



SO WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT LENT, ANYWAY?

Lent begins on 9 February. It begins with Ash Wednesday, which always falls in the seventh week before Easter. Lent is widely observed by Christians around the world as a time of fasting or meditation.

Why 'Ash Wednesday'? What do ashes have to do with anything? This goes right back to the Old Testament custom of putting ashes on one's face or clothing as a symbol of repentance or remorse. (e.g. Esther 4.1; Jeremiah 6.26).

When the early Church began to observe Lent as a period of preparation for Easter, repentance and remorse played a key part. Therefore the wearing of ashes was adopted as a proper external sign of this inward attitude of remorse or repentance.

So the early Christians, especially during the Middle Ages, used the first day of Lent to impose ashes on the heads of the clergy and the people. Nowadays, these ashes come from the burning of the palm crosses that were handed out on Palm Sunday during the previous year's Lent.

Some churches continue this theme of repentance by the symbolic use of purple clerical dress during Lent.

What about the custom of giving up things for Lent? In the past, Lent was a time for fasting, because it is based on the period of 40 days spent by Jesus in the wilderness before the beginning of his public ministry in Galilee. Jesus fasted for 40 days, and so his followers were encouraged to do the same thing. The early Church recommended a fast of

LENT AT ST JAMES

ASH WEDNESDAY - 9TH FEBRUARY

9.30am Holy Eucharist
7.00pm Sung Eucharist

both services include the Imposition of Ashes

TUESDAY LENT EUCHARIST & LUNCH



Tuesdays at 12 o'clock beginning on February 15th. The Eucharist is followed by a simple lunch of soup, bread & cheese, fruit, tea or coffee in Church. Proceeds will go to USPG - serving overseas missions.

LENT COURSE - BETTER TOGETHER?



Relationships are crucial to our lives. This year's Lent Course "Better Together" looks at relationships in the world, in our church and in our families with the help of the Abbot of Ampleforth, Nicky Gumbell, John Bell, Jane Williams and Dr David Hope

SNOWDROP WEEKENDS

St James' Church
5th/6th & 12th/13th February

Saturday 10.30 am - 4.30 pm
Sunday 2.30 - 4.30 pm



We are inviting people to see the wonderful display of snowdrops and aconites in the churchyard. If you've got time - drop in and bring a friend

CHAIN VICARS

If you are unhappy with your vicar, simply have your churchwarden send a copy of this letter to six other churches who are also tired of their vicar.



Then bundle up your vicar and send him to the church on the top of the list in the letter. Within a week you will receive 16,435 vicars and one of them should be all right!

Have faith in this chain letter for vicars. Do not break the chain. One church did - and got their old vicar back!
(From a Salisbury Theological College leaflet)

WHAT THE 23RD PSALM IS REALLY ALL ABOUT

The Lord is my Shepherd

That's Relationship.

I shall not want

That's Supply.

He maketh me to lie down
in green pastures

That's Rest.

He leadeth me beside
the still waters

That's Refreshment.

He restoreth my soul

That's Healing.

He leadeth me in the paths
of righteousness

That's Guidance.

For His name sake

That's Purpose.

Yea, though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death

That's Testing.

I will fear no evil

That's Protection.

For Thou art with me

That's Faithfulness.

Thy rod and Thy staff
they comfort me

That's Discipline.

Thou preparest a table before
me in the presence of mine
enemies

That's Hope.

Thou anointest my head with oil

That's Consecration.

My cup runneth over

That's Abundance.

Surely goodness and mercy shall
follow me all the days of my life

That's Blessing.

And I will

dwell

in the house of
the Lord

That's Security.

Forever

That's Eternity!





Rosanne interviews Tracy Toohey

Sometimes in my teaching days I used to wonder what effect the advice I would give to my pupils might have on their future lives. You never knew!! But I'll bet the teacher who told Tracy "You'll never make a nurse, you haven't got it in you" doesn't realise that she set off a chain reaction which is still reverberating today. I'm awfully glad I didn't say anything quite so sweeping to her all those years ago (yes, I was one of her teachers), because she'd never have forgotten and that might have spoilt what turned out to be a happy and unexpected reunion when I interviewed her a few weeks ago.

Tracy's father died when she was a very small girl. Until she was eight she lived with her mother and elder brother in the village of Adstock in Buckinghamshire. Her parents helped run the Sunday school and her mum continued to do so after her bereavement. Her mother remarried when Tracy was eight and the family came to live just off the Abingdon Road. The country girl began to adjust to town life. After a few terms at primary school she transferred to Donnington Middle School, where as Tracy Collins she was a pupil of mine and a

very pleasant one at that. She describes herself as a good all-rounder finding few problems in her studies and she thinks that is why at Milham Ford School she began to "coast" and the comment that stunned her into action was made. "I'll show them," she thought. And she did!

Her first course of action was to sign on at the Oxford College of Further Education, to gain all-important "O" levels, next a years experience at The Rivermead Centre. From there she became a "Nocette", in layman's terms a trainee nurse at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (N.O.C.) The training was very valuable and she worked there until, aged nineteen, she went to Coventry where she spent three years doing her base line general training.

It was in 1983, whilst helping to transfer a patient by ambulance to another hospital, that she met a tall handsome paramedic. Asking if he'd return her to her workplace after delivering the patient he agreed, on condition that she would accompany him to a Valentine's Day dance the following week. Tracy went, taking a friend along for

support, and shy as she was she and Gary soon realised that their relationship was "for keeps". After several years together they bought their house in Dene Road and were married in August 1991. They honeymooned by travelling round the world, stopping off to visit relatives in New Zealand.

A qualified nurse by this time, Tracy was back at the Nuffield working specifically with children. She found herself particularly suited to the work and so transferred to the John Radcliffe for specialist training. She spent time in the intensive care unit and then went to Bristol to take her advanced nursing diploma.

In 1996 their son Jonathan was born and baby Hannah arrived three years later. While the children were small Tracy joined the mother and toddler group at St Francis, and to quote her own words "fell in love with the whole family atmosphere there". Until then her main church going had been Evensong at Hertford College where a family friend was chaplain. She and Gary and the children were drawn in to St Francis, worship there regularly and Jonathan is a server.

After time at home with the children Tracy thought that it was time for a career change. She did not forsake nursing though. She took a health-visiting course at Brookes University, culminating in a first class degree. She now works at what she describes as a very busy, brilliant, diverse and challenging practice on Blackbird Leys. A large part of the work involves the use of I.T. and she chairs the working party set up to help nurses develop their ability to use I.T., thus enhancing their career prospects. She is also a governor at The Slade Nursery School and involved in a variety of activities at St Francis, as I'm sure the congregation there knows. So from a retiring little girl with a vocation into the nursing profession, to a self assured person with a wealth of experience and expertise, she has come a long way since I first knew her over thirty years ago.

How would you describe yourself as a child?

Shy, a little bit insecure. I certainly needed direction.

Have you any special childhood memories you'll never forget?

We used to go camping in France. We had a lovely holiday in Spain once and the car broke down. We had to wait for two weeks for it to be fixed. It stretched the budget a bit but my brother and I didn't mind, we loved it.

I also remember holidays on our boat up and down the Thames. We would moor up and we children would be allowed to go off and explore. We once found an old mineshaft with a tunnel to get out. It was just like Enid Blyton's "Famous Five" – wonderful.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Yes very much so but I feel I'm on a long journey within my faith.

What do you consider the best part of life today?

Family and friends being together. Supporting each other is the most important thing.
(R.B. Tracy and her family are very close especially with her brother and sister-in law. Their family gatherings sound amazing).

What disappoints you about modern life?

I think it's people's unrealistic expectations. They expect so much yet you can achieve a lot without the stress.

If you could make a huge change to something what would it be?

The system whereby at the moment you can't go out to work without losing your benefits. It would be nice to have a mix and match system so that people who want to might make a new start. I think it's coming though.....

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

Swimming (Gary and I enjoy a swim with the children), reading especially biographies-I like to go on holiday with a good book. I love the computer, surfing the Internet.

What makes you laugh?

I enjoy having a few friends round for a meal so we can joke and reminisce. It's fun getting together to play games- like Mahjong.

Do you have a hero or heroine past or present?

Clare Tomlinson. She is so lovely and has such a good spirit. She's gifted and intuitive.

Do you have plans for the future, say in the next ten years?

I'd love to play the piano (I will!). Learn to dance and find time for my family, my friends and myself.



Lent at St Francis

Ash Wednesday - 9th February

7.00pm Sung Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes

A Course for Lent

Better Together?

Relationships are crucial to our lives. This year's Lent Course "Better Together" looks at relationships in the world, in our church and in our families with the help of the Abbot of Ampleforth, Nicky Gumbell, John Bell, Jane Williams and Dr David

Hope

Tuesdays at 2.30 pm with the Friends of St Francis in church beginning February 15th.

Evening Group at 3 Bulan Road at 7.35 pm on Wednesdays after the 7.00 pm Eucharist in church

(group will meet on Thursday 24th February instead of Wednesday 23rd)

Services during Lent

these will all take place in church - Sundays - **Stations of the Cross** at 6.00 pm, followed by

Evening Prayer

Morning Prayer continues on Saturdays at 9.15 am followed by breakfast.

As we keep the important season of Lent, why not join in one of these times of prayer and devotion? - if you can't come to church, you could always set aside one of these times for prayer at home.



Saint Valentine



There are two confusing things about this day of romance and anonymous

love-cards strewn with lace, cupids and ribbon: firstly, there seems to have been two different Valentines in the 4th century - one a priest martyred on the Flaminian Way, under the emperor Claudius, the other a bishop of Terni martyred at Rome. And neither seems to have had any clear connection with lovers or courting couples.

So why has Valentine become the patron saint of romantic love? By Chaucer's time the link was assumed to be because on these saints' day - 14 February - the birds are supposed to pair. Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine's Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place in the middle of February. One of the Roman gods honoured during this Festival was Pan, the god of nature. Another was Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. During the Lupercalia it was a popular custom for young men to draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be partners or 'sweethearts' during the time of the celebrations. Even modern Valentine decorations bear an ancient symbol of love - Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows.

There are no churches in England dedicated to Valentine, but since 1835 his relics have been claimed by the Carmelite church in Dublin.

Mothering Sunday

6th March

ST JAMES

10.00 am Family Eucharist

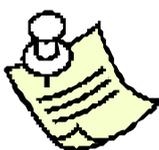
ST FRANCIS

10.30 am Family Eucharist



Parish Weekend

The Parish Weekend planned for September this year has had to be postponed. Hopefully we shall be able to resume our annual weekend away next year.



The Gem



Lord, take this raw material
And shape this rough design,
Fashion it and hone it into
Something good and fine.
Just as an uncut diamond has
No beauty of its own,
Make this dull unpolished gem
Into a precious stone.

For we are just the Potter's clay
Upon the turning wheel,
Unsculpted blocks of marble
Untempered sheets of steel.
So take out all the flecks and specks
Just cleanse and purify,
Remove the hidden faults and flaws
So clear unto Your eye.

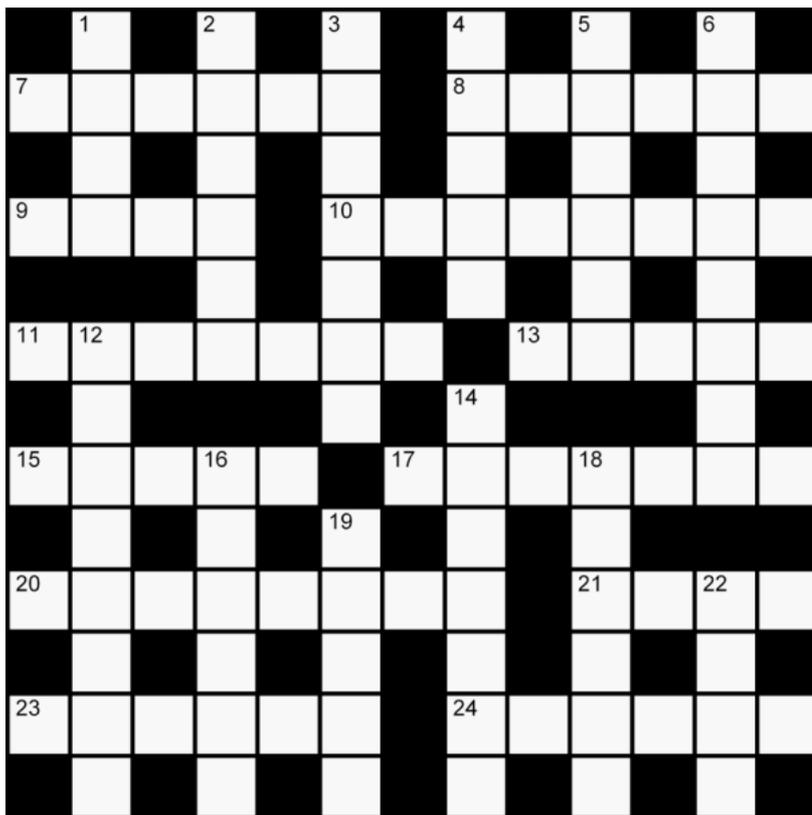
And make us really pliable
To fit into Your mould,
For from refining fire
Comes forth the purest gold.
So let our lives be yielded to
The pattern You have planned,
Until at last we have become
A jewel in Your hand.

Anonymous

January's Solution



February's Crossword



Across

- 7 Captain of Jabin's army, killed by Jael with a nail through his temple. (6)
- 8 Close at hand (6)
- 9 Pause for relaxation (4)
- 10 Circular bands of flowers (8)
- 11 Stateliness (7)
- 13 A deep yellow color (5)
- 15 Those picked by Moses to report on the land of Canaan (5)
- 17 The suffering of Jesus at the crucifixion (7)
- 20 Christ's birth (8)
- 21 There was none of this when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem (4)
- 23 The fourth son of Ham (6)
- 24 Tree fruit which yields oil (6)

Down

- 1 The sum of eight and one (4)
- 2 Biting insect with wings (6)
- 3 Badly behaved (7)
- 4 A trap (5)
- 5 Balak sent for this man to curse the Israelites (6)
- 6 One of those delivered from the fiery furnace. (8)
- 12 Son of Shem, born the year after the Deluge (8)
- 14 Home of Nebuchadnezzar (7)
- 16 He was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire (6)
- 18 One of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation (6)
- 19 Roman counterpart of Greek Artemis (5)
- 22 A Hebrew measure, the tenth of an ephah (4)

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8.00 am | Holy Communion |
| 10.00 am | Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>) All Age Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>) |
| 1.00 pm | Cowley Asian Christian Fellowship |

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10.30 am | Parish Eucharist <i>[Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month]</i> |
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Mid-Week Services & Meetings

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|-----------|----------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Monday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 10.00 am | Toddler Group – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| Tuesday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 10.00 am | Toddler Service – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| Wednesday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 12.00 pm | St James Prayer Group – <i>13 Clive Road</i> |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| Thursday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 9.30 am | Eucharist - followed by coffee – <i>St James</i> |
| | 11.00 am | St Francis Prayer Group |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 7.00 pm | Eucharist - <i>St Francis</i> |
| Friday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 7.00 pm | Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at St Francis</i> |
| Saturday | 9.15 am | Morning Prayer & Breakfast - <i>St Francis</i> |

Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings, Confessions and Home Communion can be made with any of the clergy.

Day Off

Stephen has Friday off; Except in emergency, please try and respect this day of rest. Lorne can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends.

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