

REFLECTION

Lent is the time of year when the Church tells us to take a deep breath and begin to taste the gifts of life once more, the parts of life that bring the inner monk in each of us alive.

Lent gives us the space we need to refresh our hearts and quiet our souls in expectation of beginning again to live life well.

We're meant to become conscious of our blessings, to savour the goodness of the God who is with us always, who carries us beyond ourselves, who is our strength and our support through all the seeds and undergrowth of life.

The Rule of Benedict, that 1500-year-old guide-rail upon which the entire Order of St Benedict has been based, offers perhaps Lent's clearest definition. Benedict does not talk about "giving up" things just in the name of giving them up. On the contrary, Benedict teaches us to add things to our lives that are missing but deeply needed if our inner lives are to grow and guide us through all the twists and turns of life.

We need the kind of good reading that nourishes our contemplation of God's presence here and now. It faces us with the realities of life and, the Rule says, will carry us through whatever dark days await us in life.

We need to take the kind of time that allows us to sink into an awareness of the Presence of God even now, even here, that will give us new courage for the mysteries of life.

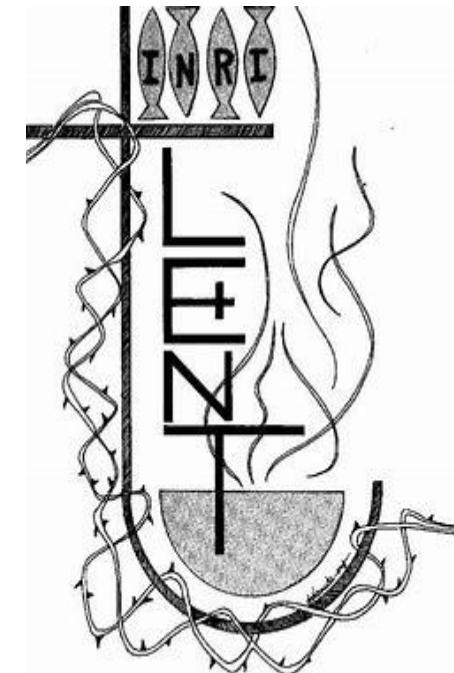
We need the quiet it takes to contemplate the important things of life, to refuse to allow excess in anything to drown us, to become aware again of the beauty of life everywhere so that no interruptions, no darkness along life's uneven paths, can defeat us.

Lent raises the fullness of the beautiful in us at the thought of the resurrection of God in our hearts.

Then our inner monk will lead us into the centre of a renewed sense of life's gifts as well as its challenges. Then we will have the inner insight and outer courage it takes to trust that every day of our lives is meant to be a good one.

Sister Joan Chittister Feeding your inner Monk

LET US PRAY LENT 2026



Daily scripture readings,
prayer resources, book suggestions,
reflections and poems
to accompany you
on your journey from Lent to Easter

LET US PRAY LENT

The season of Lent is an opportunity to take time out, to examine our lives and reassess our priorities, to quieten ourselves and listen to the gentle voice of God.

Prayer is just being with God. It is a journey into love. Before entering a place of prayer or before beginning the day, pause at the threshold for the length of an 'Our Father' and become aware of God gazing on you in love. God speaks in all sorts of ways – through scripture, through nature, through other people. However, unless we slow down and listen, we miss his promptings and his voice. So often we hurry through life, rushing from one task to the next, barely pausing to reflect or listen to the voice of the Lord. By slowing down, and being more present to each moment, all sorts of lessons are learned. For me, it is an invitation to a whole way of being – one that recognises that God is not 'out there' to be sought, but already 'in here' to be found.

Reflection: Annie O'Connor, *extract from a talk on prayer*

Daily texts: The Liturgy Office for England and Wales (Year A)

We invite you to use each day's verse as a starting point for personal prayer.

Ash Wednesday A pure heart create for me, O God, and give me again the joy of your help. *Gospel Acclamation Psalm 50:12, 14*

Thursday Anyone who loses his life for my sake, that man will save it.

Luke 9:22-25

Friday A humbled, contrite heart, O God, you will not spurn. *Psalm 50:3-6, 18-19*

Saturday Show me, Lord, your way so that I may walk in your truth.

Psalm 85:1-6

WEEK 1

Sunday Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. *Matthew 4:4*

Monday Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life. *Psalm 18:8-10, 15*

Tuesday The Lord rescues the just in all their distress. *Psalm 33:4-7, 16-19*

Wednesday Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart, for I am all tenderness and compassion. *Joel 2:12-13*

Thursday On the day I called, you answered me, O Lord. *Psalm 137:1-3, 7-8*

Friday Go and be reconciled with your brother first. *Matthew 5:20-26*

Saturday You will be a people consecrated to the Lord God.

Deuteronomy 26:16-19

I believe he rose again.

Sometimes I doubt.

Some mornings belief feels like sunrise;
other days it feels like holding ashes.

But even then – he meets me.

In the place between faith and fear,
he stands, hands open, light spilling through the wounds.

Hope leans forward, tender and persistent,
listening to the groans of creation.

It gazes through shadow,
finding within darkness the first faint shimmer of dawn.

There is a holy audacity in this hope—
a quiet confidence that all things are held in nail-scarred hands,
that the soil itself waits for the footsteps of resurrection.

So I believe—
in love stronger than death,
in mercy that mends what was torn,
in the gardener of new creation, who still meets us in bread and wine,
who still meets us when we are afraid,
who still meets us at breakfast,
and who, even in doubt,
still meets me.

I believe
that the darkest day was never the last,
and that even now the earth hums softly with resurrection—
for he said,
“I am the resurrection and the life.”

Rev'd Jon Swales

from the *Creed Collection of poems*

• Jon Swales is an Anglican priest, prophetic theologian, and poet. He is founder and leader of Lighthouse West Yorkshire, a fresh expression of church and grassroots charity rooted among people who have been battered and bruised by the storms of life, particularly those facing homelessness, poverty, and social exclusion.

<https://www.cruciformjustice.com/>



Tertia die resurrexit a mortuis (On the third day He rose again)

Dawn does not rush.
It comes softly, as if the world itself is afraid to breathe.
I reach the next line: On the third day he rose again.
And the silence bends toward light.

The darkest day is not the final day.
The tomb is not the end of the story, but its turning point.
What we call dead, God calls seed.
What we bury in despair, Love raises in mystery.

He rose— not to erase death, but to unmake it.
Not to deny the wounds, but to show that they can shine.
The cross still stands, but now as a tree that flowers.

It begins in stillness: stone, linen, breath.
No thunder, no spectacle
— just a slow stirring as creation wakes from its long night.

And there, in the garden, the world begins again.
Dew on grass. A voice speaking a name.
Mary turns, and grief gives way to recognition.
The gardener stands before her, hands still scarred by mercy,
tending the soil of resurrection.

He walks the road to Emmaus, a stranger at first,
his words burning in the hearts of the weary.

At supper, bread breaks, and suddenly they see— light in the ordinary.
He vanishes, but the fire remains.

He stands in the upper room, where fear has bolted the door.
Peace, he says.
He shows his hands. He breathes on them.
Love still carries scars. Love still breathes forgiveness.

He meets them at the lakeshore, where failure hangs heavy.
The smell of charcoal, the sound of waves.
Breakfast sizzles. Mercy tastes like fish and friendship.
The risen one still cooks for the hungry, still restores the lost.

And he meets us still—
in the breaking of bread, in the pouring of wine,
in the trembling of prayer, in the warmth of dawn,
in the quiet moments when fear begins to fade.

WEEK 2

Sunday From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard: 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' *Matthew 17:5*

Monday Grant, pardon and you will be pardoned. *Luke 6:36-38*

Tuesday Learn to do good, search for justice. *Isaiah 1:10, 16-20*

Wednesday I am the light of the world, says the Lord; anyone who follows me will have the light of life. *John 8:12*

Thursday Happy the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.
Psalm 1:1-4, 6

Friday God so loved the world so much that he gave his only Son; everyone who believes in him has eternal life. *John 3:16*

Saturday Your brother here was dead and has come to life. *Luke 15:1-3, 11-32*

WEEK 3

Sunday The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. *Romans 5:1-2, 5-8*

Monday My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life; when can I enter and see the face of God? *Psalm 41:2-3, 42: 3-4*

Tuesday Your Father will not forgive you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart. *Matthew 18:21-35*

Wednesday O praise the Lord, Jerusalem! *Psalm 147: 12-13, 15-16*

Thursday He who is not with me is against me. *Luke 11:14-23*

Friday Repent, says the Lord, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. *Mark 12:28-34*

Saturday What I want is love, not sacrifice. *Hosea 5:15-6:6*

WEEK 4

Sunday I am the light of the world, says the Lord; anyone who believes in me will have the light of life. *John 8:12*

Monday My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word, because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption. *Psalm 129:5, 7*

Tuesday I saw a stream of water coming from the Temple, bring life to all wherever it flowed. *Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12*

Wednesday I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me will never die. *John 11:25, 26*

Thursday O Lord, remember me out of the love you have for your people. *Psalm 105:19-23*

Friday The Lord is close to the broken-hearted. *Psalm 33:16, 18-21, 23*

Saturday Lord God, I take refuge in you. *Psalm 7:2-3, 9-12*

WEEK 5

Sunday With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Psalm 129:7

Monday If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. *John 8:1-11*

Tuesday O Lord, listen to my prayer and let my cry for help reach you.

Psalm 101:2-3, 16-21

Wednesday He has sent his angel to rescue his servants. *Daniel 3:14-20, 24-25, 28*

Thursday The Lord remembers his covenant forever. *Psalm 104:4-9*

Friday In my anguish I called to the Lord and he heard my voice.

Psalm 17:2-7

Saturday I will make them into one nation. *Ezekiel 37:21-28*

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Psalm 21:8-9, 17-20, 23-24

Monday He does not cry or shout aloud. *Isaiah 42:1-7*

Tuesday My lips will tell of your help. *Psalm 70:1-6, 15, 17*

Wednesday I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. *Isaiah 50:4-9*

Holy Thursday I give you a new commandment: love one another just as I have loved you, says the Lord. *Gospel Acclamation John 13:34*

Good Friday After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, "It is accomplished," and bowing his head he gave up his spirit. *John 18:1-19:42*

Holy Saturday see poem below

Easter Sunday I shall pour clean water over you and I shall give you a new heart. *Ezekiel 36:16-28*

JESUS IS LAID IN A TOMB Malcolm Guite

Here at the centre everything is still
before the stir and movement of our grief
which bears its pain with rhythm, ritual,
beautiful useless gestures of relief.
So they anoint the skin that cannot feel
soothing his ruined flesh with tender care,
kissing the wounds they know they cannot heal,
with incense scenting only empty air.
He blesses every love that weeps and grieves
and makes our grief the pangs of a new birth.
The love that's poured in silence at old graves
renewing flowers, tending the bare earth,
is never lost. In him all love is found
and sown with him, a seed in the rich ground.

PRAYER RESOURCES

Through Lent with St Matthew – this online retreat with daily scriptures, music, pictures and reflections. <https://www.onlineprayer.net/l26-m/>

Pray As You Go – an app & website for daily prayer from the Jesuits. Guided audio prayer with music, daily scripture and reflections plus prayers for children, retreats, videos and imaginative contemplation exercises. <https://sacredspace.com/recommended#prayasyougo>

An Ignatian Guide to Lent – learn about Lent and about Ignatian spirituality. <https://www.jesuits.org/spirituality/ignatian-lent/>

Lent 2026 – Sacred Space Practical Christianity – daily reflections on living out our faith and reflecting the teachings of Jesus in daily life. <https://sacredspace.com/events/retreat/lent-2026/>

Click to Pray offers three moments of prayer each day that invite you to meet with Jesus and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. <https://www.clicktopray.org/>

From Ashes to Glory – Each Sunday during Lent, read an introduction to the week's prayer and on Ash Wednesday and the Mondays of Lent and Easter Week, find a brief Scripture passage, steps for reflecting with the Examen, and a closing prayer.

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/from-ashes-to-glory/>

CAFOD – daily prayers and reflections plus information about ways in which you and the wider CAFOD family can support our ongoing activities. <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/lent-calendar>

A4 Reflection sheets Scripture, reflections, prayers and poems. <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/01/LENT-REFLECTION-SHEET-2026.pdf>

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

Meeting God in John: A Companion for Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Beyond by David Ford

Dancing to the Heartbeat of God: Stories of Discipleship: The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2026

Lent Devotional 2026: A Christian Lent Devotional for Daily Reflection, Prayer, and Acts of Faith by Mon Peace

The Way of Thomas Merton: A Prayer Journey Through Lent by Robert Inchausti

Easter in Disguise: The 2026 Lent Book by former journalist Sister Liz Dodd of St Joseph of Peace