



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC PARISH

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Lent 2014

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 5th March

Wednesday 5th March is **Ash Wednesday** the start of the annual season of Lent, when we prepare for Easter by works of prayer, fasting and charity. We often think of 'giving up something' for Lent, or perhaps 'doing something extra', but the Church calls us to do both – and to strengthen our efforts with prayer to God our loving Father. The more we take this season seriously by our efforts at **Prayer, Fasting and Alms-giving** the more we are able to enter into the most profound mysteries of our faith at Eastertime: the suffering, death, and ultimately the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

To help us start Lent in the right way at the Masses on Ash Wednesday ashes made by burning the previous year's palms (from Palm Sunday) are blessed and distributed. To help us focus on Lent, Ash Wednesday (along with Good Friday) is a day of **Fasting and Abstinence**. We are asked to eat less, to refrain from eating meat, and to give the money saved to those who are poor and in need.

We will be making pilgrimages to the various churches in our deanery in Lent, each Wednesday, for the **Station Masses**. The name of these Masses comes from the Latin word *statio* meaning a pause point in a journey. As we journey *spiritually* through Lent we journey *physically* around our deanery, and pause each week to celebrate Mass. Each Wednesday we'll gather from 7pm with a chance for Confessions, and then Mass will be celebrated at 7.30pm:

12th March - St Edward the Confessor, Aylestone Road

19th March - St Joseph's, Goodwood Road

26th March - Holy Cross, Leicester

2nd April - St Thomas More (with Bishop Malcolm OP; Mass starting at 7pm)

9th April - Immaculate Conception, Oadby

Stations of the Cross will be celebrated each **Friday evening at 6.45pm**. A different person or group in the parish will take the lead each week. Also, Stations will be led by the clergy (Frs Michael, Simon, and *[when he's returned from his sabbatical]* Philip, and Deacon Joe) on **Sundays evening at 5pm**. Again, the name 'Stations' of the Cross comes from the idea that we pause at 14 points along the journey Jesus made during his final hours; from his condemnation, through his passion and ultimately his death, to his body being laid in the tomb.

On Friday 14th March we will be remembering those in the world who have very little to eat when we observe **Cafod's Lenten Fast Day**. Cafod is the agency of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales that acts as a channel for the financial gifts we give to help those less fortunate than ourselves. By fasting on this day, and giving the money saved to Cafod, we are showing solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need.

We also have some prayer resources for Lent, which are available in the parish room: **Walk with Me** – a Lenten journey of prayer for 2014. This small booklet, priced at £1, offers meditations and reflections for each day of Lent, and is small enough to be carried around in a handbag or pocket each day. **Children's Lent Calendar** – each day during Lent children are invited to reflect on a different aspect of our Christian life, sometimes with a short piece of scripture, sometimes with a 'thought for the day'.

Finally there is a blog which is available on the web at www.40days2014.com This features a different Thought for the Day each day, organised by students and graduates connected with the Catholic Chaplaincy of Nottingham University, and the first has been written by Bishop Malcolm OP. Do have a look at the blog if you get chance, and perhaps stake a minute or two each day to read and reflect on the thought offered.

*Do seriously consider how to make Lent
a special season of grace this year*

