

Lenten Journey

2023

St John Vianney & St Thomas Becket

THE SEASON OF LENT



From the earliest days, Easter - The feast of the Resurrection was celebrated as the climax of the Church's calendar and it was set aside as the day when new converts were received into the family of believers. But adult baptism didn't happen overnight. After several years of training, the candidate entered into an intense period of preparation. A time of **Prayer** (learning secret prayers i.e. Creed, Our Father), **Fasting** and **Charity** - all aimed at preparing the candidate for baptism at the Easter Vigil. It lasted for six weeks (36 days, Sunday's weren't included). As the Church grew, Lent took on a new aspect - rather than preparing people for baptism, it was seen as a time of renewal, preparing to renew one's baptismal promises at the celebration of the resurrection. It took on a penitential aspect. It was increased to 40 days in length, to reflect Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, hence Lent begins midweek on Wednesday and the custom grew that everyone was marked with ashes, a sign of repentance. Although the emphasis had shifted, it remained & still remains, a time of Prayer, Fasting & Charity. Do you see how closely Lent & Easter are linked? True to say, that the way we spend the next 40 days will determine how we celebrate the Easter festival. Lent shouldn't be a sad time, a time of trial, to punish & test ourselves, but through Prayer, Fasting & Charity it should be a season which enriches, nourishes and liberates us; a time when we actively grow in our relationship with God and with our brothers & sisters.

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS TIMES

- 10.00am ~ St Wilfrid's
- 11.00am ~ St Thomas Becket
- 11.15am ~ St Bede's
- 12.00pm ~ Our Lady's
- 7.30pm ~ St Wilfrid's

PRAYER

“There is nothing more worthwhile than to converse with God, for prayer unites us with God as his companions... Our soul should be directed in God, not merely when we suddenly think of prayer, but even when we are concerned with something else... Prayer is the light of the soul, giving true knowledge of God... Prayer is a precious way of communicating with God, it gladdens the soul... It is more than words. It is a desire for God... the gift of God’s grace... Once we have tasted this food, we are set alight by an eternal desire for the Lord, the fiercest of fires lighting up our soul.”

St. John Chrysostom

CHURCHES OPEN FOR PRAYER ~ Both St Bede's and St Wilfrid's are open each day for private prayer from 8.00am until 5.00pm. Call in for a quiet few minutes with the Lord.

READ POPE FRANCIS' LENTEN PASTORAL LETTER ~

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/46575>

JOIN 'CELEBRATE' THIS LENT ~ Go to: events@celebratetrust.org

DOWNLOAD ~ The Cafod Lent Calendar – www.cafod.org.uk/pray

LENTEN HOUSE MASSES ~ Please speak to Fr. Paul if you would like Mass to be celebrated in your own homes this Lent / Easter with family, friends, neighbours. Contact the Parish Office.

TIME BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ~

Sundays 4.00 – 5.00pm – St Wilfrid's

Tuesdays 11.00 – 12.00pm - St Bede's

Thursdays 6.30 – 7.30pm – St Wilfrid's

Saturdays 11.00 – 11.50am – St Wilfrid's

THURSDAY EVENING MASS ~ Please note that during Lent there will be an evening Mass at St Wilfrid's 7.30pm. Prior to Mass, from 6.30pm, there will be the opportunity for silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS ~ Will be prayed at St Wilfrid's on Sunday afternoon 4.00pm; at Our Lady's on Wednesdays 12.30pm; at St Thomas Becket on Thursdays at 10.00am and at St Bede's on Fridays at 7.00pm.

WISTASTON HALL, CREWE ~ Have arranged a Day of Reflection on Wednesday 15th March.

A day of Scripture, Reflection, Adoration and Prayer. They have also organised a Weekend in preparation for Easter - 17th - 19th March. For further details on both of these events do to:

www.orc-crewe.org or ring: 01270 568653.

FOR OUR LENT REFLECTION ~ And in preparation for the 2025 Holy Year, the Diocese has prepared an introduction to the II Vatican Council, together with a presentation of two of its major Documents: *Dei Verbum (on Revelation)* and *Lumen Gentium (on the Church)*. The aim is simply to give an overview of both documents. These are available (mp3 audio file) on the diocesan website: www.shrewsburydiocese.org

There will be the opportunity to gather as a parish to discuss these documents – on Mondays (beginning on the 6th March) at St Bede's 7.00pm

RECONCILIATION

“The special feature of Easter is that it is the occasion when the whole Church rejoices over the forgiveness of sin... All of us must strive hard and so on Easter day no one should remain bound by the vices of his former nature.”

St Leo the Great



As well as the regular Saturday Confessions at St Wilfrid's 11.00 – 11.50am; there will also be two Parish Reconciliation Services during Lent. These will be celebrated on the following dates:

Monday 3rd April 7.00pm ~ St Bede's

Tuesday 4th April 7.00pm ~ St Wilfrid's

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also available on request.

PRAY ~ One decade of the Rosary each day, or more if you are able, praying for Peace in our World.

FASTING

“These 40 days should be given over to fasting which means, not simply a reduction in our food, but the elimination of our evil habits.”

St Leo the Great

“Fasting in Lent is intended to direct our minds, hearts, bodies back to a deeper love for Jesus Christ crucified... The practice of bodily mortification is a way to remember, a chance to acknowledge by penitence our own contribution to Christ's suffering. Nonetheless fasting has a more important reason... We all have the experience at times of drifting away from God, of allowing worldly concerns to replace an essential need for God. Fasting from food, from indulgent behaviours, from unnecessary enjoyments, is a way to make room for God to occupy again the centre of our lives”

Fr. Donald Haggerty

A FRUGAL LUNCH ~ (Soup & Bread) Will be held in St Wilfrid's Hall each Saturday throughout Lent after the Midday Mass. Proceeds to Cafod, Mary's Meals & Aid to the Church in Need. All Welcome.

CHARITY

“What you do yourself, will be done to you; what you give, will be given to you; as you judge, so you will be judged; as you show kindness, so it will be shown to you. Your portion will be weighed out for you in your own scales.”

St Clement 1



'WALK AGAINST HUNGER' ~ This year, Cafod is again encouraging us to walk 10,000 steps each day to feed the hungry (this is approximately five miles or one & a half hours walk daily). I am pleased to announce that Sr Phyllis, together with Ray Harrison and myself are taking up the challenge. If you can sponsor us, your support would be greatly appreciated. (simply, place your donation in an envelope marked 'Cafod' and hand into church).

As part of this venture, I invite you to join me on **Saturday 25th March** (departing 9.15am) for a joint **Sponsored Walk** between our three churches (approx 10 miles).

Please contact the Parish Office for further details. ~ Fr Paul

CAFOD ENVELOPES ~ Are available at the back of our churches. These can be returned anytime throughout Lent. With these envelopes it is easy to *Gift Aid* any donations that you make, thus increasing your gift to the needy of the world.

CHESHIRE FOODBANK ~ Donations of tins, dry foods, soap etc., can be left at the back of church. These will be forwarded to the Cheshire Foodbank for local distribution.

CHURCH CLEANING ~ Thanks to all who already volunteer to help clean our churches and help look after our gardens. If you can spare 30 minutes or more each week / month to help them, please contact the Parish Office.

LENTEN WEEKLY PROGRAMME

SUNDAY

- 9.15am ~ Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)
11.00am ~ Mass (*St Thomas Becket*)
11.15am ~ Mass (*St Bede's*)
4.00pm – 5.00pm ~ Stations of the Cross followed by Benediction (*St Wilfrid's*)
5.30pm ~ Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

MONDAY

- 9.10am ~ Morning Prayer followed by Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)
7.00pm ~ Reflection on the II Vatican Council (*St Bede's*) *Beginning on the 6th March

TUESDAY

- 9.10am ~ Morning Prayer followed by Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)
11.00 – 11.55am ~ Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament (*St Bede's*)
12.00pm ~ Midday Mass (*St Bede's*)

WEDNESDAY

- 12.00pm ~ Midday Mass (*Our Lady's*)
12.30pm ~ Stations of the Cross (*Our Lady's*)

THURSDAY

- 9.10am ~ Morning Prayer followed by Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)
10.00am ~ Stations of the Cross (*St Thomas Becket*)
12.00pm ~ Midday Mass (*St Bede's*)
6.30 – 7.25pm ~ Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament (*St Wilfrid's*)
7.30pm ~ Evening Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

FRIDAY

- 9.10am ~ Morning Prayer followed by Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)
12.00pm ~ Midday Mass (*St Bede's*)
7.00pm ~ Stations of the Cross (*St. Bede's*)

SATURDAY

- 11.00 – 11.50am ~ Exposition with the opportunity of Reconciliation (*St Wilfrid's*)
12.00pm ~ Midday Mass (*St. Wilfrid's*)
12.30pm ~ Frugal Lunch (*St. Wilfrid's Hall*)
5.30pm ~ Vigil Mass (*Our Lady's*)
6.00pm ~ Vigil Mass (*St Bede's*)

**Heavenly Father, As we begin the discipline of Lent, protect us in our struggle against evil. Make this season holy by our self-denial, that we may be cleansed from sin, renewed in spirit, ready to celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour.
Amen.**