



## From Our Vicar

Rev. Wayne Walters

### Keeping a Holy Lent

Quoting from the Ash Wednesday liturgy:

*'Sisters and brothers in Christ, from the earliest days of the Church, Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.*

*'By keeping these days with care and attention Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and grow in faith and devotion to our Lord.*

***'So, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer and fasting, by self-denial and acts of generosity and by reading and meditating on the word of God, let us keep a holy Lent.***

What might this mean for each one of us? For many the first thing that comes to mind is giving up sugar or chocolate, though many, conscious of the inflammatory effects of these substances on the human body, have substantially reduced their consumption already. If addiction is a concern, this is a healthy step to take – as long as we are not setting ourselves up for failure and discouragement or self-condemnation.

The above list in bold is a helpful one. What will assist self-examination? I find reading is a good tool for this purpose and have set aside two books for reflective reading during Lent, alongside the daily scripture which the Hope 25 book provides. A journal would be a good adjunct for this purpose, and this naturally leads to repentance—that is, seeking through confession and prayer God's help to implement godly behaviours in the areas we lack.

Fasting might take various forms. Approach it experimentally. Take into consideration your age, health needs and energy requirements of your work. Explore giving up a meal on one or two days a week, preferably at the end of the day or lunch, and give this time to reflective reading and prayer.

Consider voluntary work for a period or abstaining from some luxury and putting the money saved to a good cause or to help someone you know is in need in a way that doesn't embarrass them. Set a challenge to read a whole book of the bible or all of Paul's letters—something you may never have got round to. Always with the aim of experiencing the Lord's love and nearness in a deeper way – with joy!

The Lord is with you,

Wayne

