

Reflection Ash Wednesday 2024

The readings remind us of the three classic practices of Lent: *prayer, fasting and almsgiving*. Three traditional pathways of strengthening our relationship with Jesus which are completely interconnected.

It might help to think of fasting as saying 'no' to whatever may be an obstacle to growing our relationship with Jesus. Of saying 'no' to any form of self-centredness which hinders us from saying 'yes' more generously to Jesus through prayer and saying 'yes' to others and to the Lord's presence in them. This 'yes' also finds expression in 'almsgiving'; in giving ourselves in service to others.

The Church gives us the forty days of Lent to assess exactly **to what** we want to say 'no' and 'yes'. Beneficially we make this journey not as isolated individuals but together, as a Church family. It will bring us to the wonderful feast of Easter Sunday ready to renew our Baptismal promises with a deeper love and commitment and proclaiming a resounding '**yes**' to Christ.

We begin a season in which we ask Jesus to set us free from all that harms us so that the abundant goodness within us is set free.

O happy days! For a happy Lent ahead awaits!!