

*The Catholic Church of
St Mary Magdalen's,
Willesden Green*

Prayer Fasting Works of Love



**40
Days**

2021



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. You may be able to come to Mass on Ash Wednesday – at either 9.30am or 6.30pm – and receive the ash, or you may prefer to stay at home and with your family pray, as our Cardinal has suggested in his letter.

I hope that, as always, Lent will be a time for you grow closer to Jesus Christ. You can think of it as a time for a spiritual spring clean, to get rid of the grime in our lives and follow Jesus more faithfully. Many of you will know that there are three things we try to do in Lent:

FASTING – on Ash Wednesday for adults aged between 18 & 59 (other as well out of devotion) to eat only one full meal. We also abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays. Many people also give something up for Lent – no chocolate for me! - and this is a form of fasting. It's a way of learning self-discipline.

PRAYER – This is a good time to get into the habit of daily prayer, at beginning and the end of each day. The Rosary can help us to pray, the Psalms can help us to pray. It's especially good to pray the Stations of the Cross. There is a leaflet at the back of church (and online) to help you.

CHARITY – if we give something up, we can also put something positive in its place. This is a good time to help those in need both by giving money and also giving time. Both The Cardinal's Appeal and the CAFOD family fast day can help us to do this.

I pray that Lent will be a time of grace and growth for us all in this parish of St Mary Magdalen, Willesden Green.

Monsignor Roger.

OPPORTUNITIES AT ST MARY MAGDALEN'S THIS LENT

Through our works of prayer, fasting, and abstinence, let us heed the prophet Joel's exhortation to return to God with our whole heart (2:12).

ASH WEDNESDAY and the beginning of Lent — **Wednesday 17 February 2021**

Masses with imposition of ashes at **9.30am & 6:30pm** (*If space is limited it will be on a first come and first served basis*).

ASH WEDNESDAY is a day of fasting, and is the first day of Lent. It occurs 46 days (40 weekdays plus 6 Sundays) before Easter. According to the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the desert, where he was tempted by Satan. Lent began as a mirroring of this, fasting 40 days as preparation for Easter.

Ash Wednesday gets its name from the practice of blessing ashes made from palm branches blessed on the previous year's Palm Sunday, and placing them on the heads of people to the accompaniment of the words "*Repent, and believe in the Gospel*" or "*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*" As Catholics we believe that we are called to continuously 'turn back' to God and live a holy life. The symbol is a reminder that this life is short and our real lives will begin when we are raised to New Life in the Communion of Saints.

This year, due to social distancing restrictions, the sign of ash will be made in the ancient practice of sprinkling the ash on the top of your head and not with the sign of the cross on your forehead.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER

Sunday Mass:	6:30pm (Vigil Mass of Sunday) 9:00am, 10:30am and 12 noon
Weekday Mass:	Monday—Saturday 9:30am
Eucharistic Adoration:	Monday—Saturday one hour before morning Mass
Confession:	Each day after Mass—please let it be known to the priest you'd like to make your confession.

There will be no public celebration of Stations of the Cross. However, Father Mark invites you to pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays, during Lent. Simply log on to our *YouTube* page at: [St Mary Magdalen's RC Church, Willesden, London](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW1t7M8HKT8&autoplay=1&list=PL58g24NgWPlz8ajwy88V_FbCJTb61w5Gk) where you will see either Fr. Roger, Mark or Sudham in a video made available for you. All are welcome.

There are also a good selection of Stations of the Cross with excellent meditations which can be found online at these addresses:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW1t7M8HKT8&autoplay=1&list=PL58g24NgWPlz8ajwy88V_FbCJTb61w5Gk)

[v=wW1t7M8HKT8&autoplay=1&list=PL58g24NgWPlz8ajwy88V_FbCJTb61w5Gk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW1t7M8HKT8&autoplay=1&list=PL58g24NgWPlz8ajwy88V_FbCJTb61w5Gk)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iElvGC1WsbM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ9om4YEIns>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh9BwJVnt1E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJNjtA-Awb4>

For Children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IY2hcqxh7IA>

Pray the Rosary together. Father Mark invites you to pray the Holy Rosary with him on Friday evenings from 6:30pm to 7:00pm during the lockdown period. Simply log on to our *Facebook* page: <https://www.facebook.com/marymagwillesdengreen/> All are welcome.

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE
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Pastoral Letter for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
13-14 February 2021

Shortly it will be Ash Wednesday, a day rich in associations and symbolism. It marks the beginning a Lent, a time for turning again to the practice of our faith, in prayer, self-denial (fasting) and practical generosity (almsgiving). Ash Wednesday is the doorway into this season of renewal.

As we cross this threshold we customarily receive ashes on our foreheads, in the sign of the cross. This is a public mark of our turning again to God, seeking his mercy, forgiveness and help. We use these words: 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return'. Yes, we cannot pretend otherwise. Or: 'Repent, and believe in the Gospel'. Yes, we seek the one thing that is absolutely necessary: the grace of God.

This year receiving ashes in church is going to be difficult. Yes, our churches are safe if the protective measures are fulfilled. But we must all be very careful about travelling too far. Some churches will of course be open for the celebration of Mass as usual. But I have asked them not to make extra provision for Ash Wednesday. We must be so careful and cooperative in the measures we must take, to protect ourselves and to protect others.

I now want to emphasise an important point. Receiving ashes is an outward sign of an inner step, a movement of the heart towards our beloved Lord. This year I invite you to concentrate much more on this inner, spiritual movement than on its outward manifestation in the imposition of ashes.

My suggestion is this: celebrate Ash Wednesday at home, with your family, in the household or 'support bubble' of which you are a part. Gather for a while. Read the prayer which I offer. Bless each other by making the sign of the cross on each other's forehead. Spent some time praying in a way that you know. But please, make this a prayer of your heart for God's mercy upon this world struggling to cope with the terrible pandemic and the devastation it is bringing.

Here is a prayer:

'Lord God, with all our hearts we beseech you: have mercy on your people; spare your people; strengthen all people in the struggle against the havoc of this pandemic. Lord our God, without you we are so weak and our courage so limited. Give us your strength; give us your love; give us wisdom and skill to continue this fight. Spare your people, O Lord we pray.

Comfort those who mourn and gather into your kingdom all who have died. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, who died and rose to life, who lives and reigns with you, for ever and ever. Amen.'

Then, bless each other, using one of the two traditional formulas I have quoted earlier in this letter. Then continue with your own prayers. A pattern is suggested at the end of this letter.

As a child, my mother or father used to come to my bedside each night to settle me for sleep. I was kissed goodnight and then, either my Mum or Dad would make the sign of the cross on my forehead. They gave me their blessing. This brought me such security. I remember it to this day. Then I slept in peace.

So please do not hesitate, within your household or 'bubble', to bless each other on this Ash Wednesday. We do well to remember together our need of the good Lord. Together, and through each other, he wants to comfort and reassure us of his loving presence. If, on this day, we set aside every pretence that we can do everything of ourselves, then we create in our hearts and lives the space for God's grace and strength to find a home in us.

This is the great invitation of Ash Wednesday and of the weeks of Lent which follow. Please do take up this invitation. Open your hearts to the gift of God's presence to support, comfort and strengthen you. This year, it may be best to do this, not by going to church, but by sharing the prayer, the blessing and this moment of dedication within the love of your family and friends.

Please do include me in your prayers, too.

May God bless you all,

+ Vincent Nichols

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Archbishop of Westminster

Ash Wednesday at Home

Gather together and start with the Sign of the Cross.

Read the Gospel for today. It is from St Matthew's Gospel, 6.1-6 and 16-18.

Say together the prayer given in this Pastoral Letter.

Make the Sign of the Cross on each other's forehead, using the words you choose.

Pray together: the Our Father; the Hail Mary; each one with his or her own prayer or intention.

Conclude with the 'Glory be to the Father...'

Give each other a sign of peace.

So Lent begins!

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2021



FAMILIES FACING HUNGER NEED YOUR HELP

This Lent, please support the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal and help provide food for children and families in our communities who are facing hunger. You could also support work to help our brothers and sisters come through the global pandemic stronger and better able to cope.

www.CardinalsLentenAppeal.org.uk



Registered charity no. 233699



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

PRAYER BEFORE THE STATIONS

Jesus Christ, my Lord, with what great love you passed over the painful road which led you to death; and I, how often have I abandoned you. But now I love you with my whole soul, and because I love you, I am sincerely sorry for having offended you. My Jesus pardon me, and permit me to accompany you on this journey. You are going to die for love of me, and it is my wish dearest redeemer, to die for love of you. Jesus, in your love I wish to live, in your love I wish to die.

PRAYERS DURING THE STATIONS

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

I love you Jesus, my love, above all things; I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again, Grant that I may love you always, then do with me what you will.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER THE STATIONS

Lord, Jesus Christ, you walked the way to Calvary to rescue us from our sin, but the father, pleased with your obedient submission to his will, glorified you in the resurrection. May we follow obediently in your footsteps so that one day we may share in the glory of your risen life. We make this prayer through you who lives with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

1st Station - Jesus is condemned to death.

Consider Jesus, scourged and crowned with thorns, being unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross.

2nd Station - Jesus accepts His cross.

A heavy cross is laid upon the bruised shoulders of Jesus. He receives it with meekness for by the Holy Cross He will redeem the World.

3rd Station - Jesus falls for the first time.

Labouring under the weight of the cross, Jesus slowly sets forth to Calvary. His strength fail Him; He fall to the ground under the cross.

4th Station - Jesus meets His afflicted Mother.

Consider the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. A sword of anguish pierced His Mother's heart.

5th Station - Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross.

As the strength of Jesus fails, and He is unable to proceed, the executioners compel Simon of Cyrene to help carry his cross.

6th Station - Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

The holy woman, Veronica seeing Jesus with His face bathed in sweat and blood, presented Him her veil. He wiped His face, and left the imprint of His adorable countenance.

7th Station - Jesus falls the second time.

The pain of His wounds and the loss of His blood increasing at every step. His strength fails and Jesus falls to the ground a second time.

8th Station - Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

Women went with compassion at the pitiful sight of Jesus walking along. He said to them. "Weep not so much for me, but rather for your children."

9th Station - Jesus falls for the third time.

Jesus falls for the third time. His weakness was extreme, they tried to hasten His steps when he hardly had strength to move.

10th Station - Jesus is stripped of His garments.

Recall how Jesus arrived at the place of His Crucifixion. The soldiers tore His clothes from His bleeding body.

11th Station - Jesus is nailed to the cross.

Jesus lies down upon His Cross, and extends His arms to offer up the sacrifice of His Life for our salvation. The soldiers nail Him, hands and feet.

12th Station - Jesus dies on the cross.

Recall how Jesus agonized for three hours, dying upon the Cross. Then, overcome, His Body sagged; and He breathed His last.

13th Station - Jesus is taken down from the cross.

Recall how two of His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, took Jesus' body down from His Cross and they laid Him in the arms of His stricken Mother.

14th Station - Jesus is laid in the sepulchre .

The Body of Her dearly beloved Son is laid in the tomb. The lifeless Body remains until the hour of its glorious Resurrection.



Stations of the Cross