

Lent Devotions 2021
St John's Golcar
and
St Mark's Longwood



We hope you will join with us in these daily devotions during Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, 17th February.

The purpose of Lent is to prepare ourselves for Easter. It's good to do this by giving something up and by taking something up in the space that's been created – like the daily devotions in this booklet.

The prayers are on page 3, we begin and end with these. Then on the following pages is a short bible reading and reflection for each day. On Sundays please join our on-line services instead, if you need a copy of the Sunday order of service please contact Fr Simon.

The reflections have been written by our clergy.

There is a slightly different format provided for Easter Sunday.

On all Sundays, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday we have suggested a family activity which might work well before or after a meal. These all have this picture at the top of the page to make them easier to find:



Prayers to use daily

Find a moment, a space.

You may find it helpful to light a candle.

**Lord Jesus Christ, you gave your life that we might live.
Lead us through this time of Lent, that we may walk
closer with you, sharing in your sacrifice and glory.
Amen.**

*Now read the bible passage and reflection for the day
from the following pages.*

*Then you may wish to make your own prayers in
response, or simply be still and know that God is
with you.*

Finish with the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

DAILY READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Ash Wednesday, 17th February

Mark 1: 2-3

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
³ the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight" ',

Reflection

It is often people in the wilderness who can see truth. If you are in a wilderness of doubt/worry/loneliness/fear then you may have something very valuable for others to hear. If you are not in a wilderness, then listen to those who are.

Thursday 18th February

Mark 1: 7-8

John proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

Reflection

We are all Johns.
We are called to do what we can with what we have and who we are. We know that compared with Jesus we are nothing. But we know that Christ completes our efforts with his Holy Spirit.

Friday 19th February

Mark 1: 10-11

And just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Reflection

This was before Jesus' ministry. Before his teaching, healing, death and resurrection. God is pleased with him before Jesus had done all that we read about. So it is with you. Before you do anything, without you doing anything, God is pleased with you.

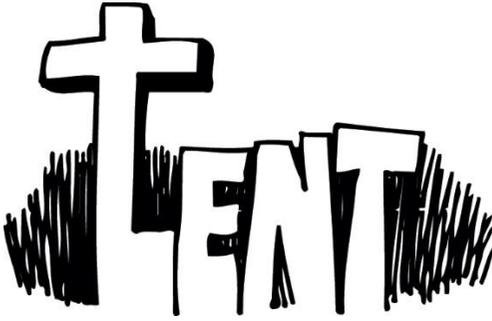
Saturday 20th February

Mark 1: 12-13

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Reflection

Jesus knows our wilderness. He knows our hunger, our doubt, our isolation, our fear, our struggles and our temptations. He came to share our lives, so that we might share his.



Family activity Sunday 21st February

Put some sand/soil/stones/rice in a tray to represent the desert.

Make some furrows and ridges.

Discuss what it might feel like if you were a tiny person in your landscape, miles from shops and Wi-Fi.

Pray for people who feel like they are stuck,
for those who are hungry and thirsty,
and for those looking for home.

Monday 22nd February

Mark 1: 14b-15

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Reflection

In my mind believing generally comes before repenting: believing in God, believing I'm wrong, believing someone's hurt.

But in this reading repentance comes first.

Whatever you believe, turn away from wrong and turn to God and so open your hearts to his gift of faith.

Tuesday 23rd February

Mark 1: 22

The people in the synagogue were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Reflection

The thesaurus says that astounded means: amazed, astonished, surprised, stunned.

O Lord, open my ears, eyes, heart and mind to be astounded by you.

Wednesday 24th February

Mark 1: 27

In the synagogue they were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.'

Reflection

There is nothing greater than God.
And in Jesus is the utter fullness of God and the
lowliness of a human.
Fully God and fully man.

Thursday 25th February

Mark 2: 6-7

Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

Reflection

To err is human, to forgive is divine.

Friday 26th February

Mark 2: 10- 12

But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—Jesus said to the paralytic— 'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.' And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

Reflection

In forgiving, Jesus gives dignity. In healing, Jesus restores humanity. Those who are stooped, stand up straight. Those who were overlooked now belong. Do you know anyone who needs encouragement to stand tall, who needs acknowledgement to know their value?

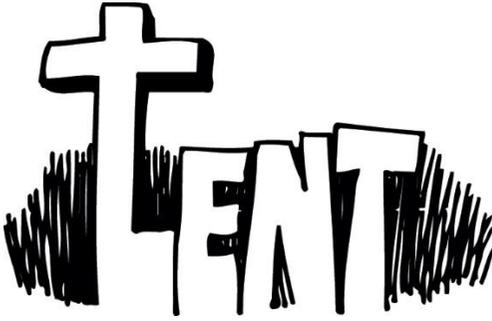
Saturday 27th February

Mark 2: 17

Jesus said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

Reflection

Those who believe they are righteous very often want things from people, but not from God. Those who believe they are sick want the wholeness and healing that only God can give.



Family activity Sunday 28th February

Find a space and lie down on the floor.

Imagine that you want to get up, but can't.

Think of some good things that are just out of reach. Tell each other about them.

While you're still on the floor discuss the hardest things about being unable to move.

Jesus gave people freedom, so stand up now.

Pray for people who are frustrated in their bodies, and for people who are not free.

Monday 1st March

Mark 2: 27-28

Jesus said to them, 'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.'

Reflection

Everybody needs a sabbath – a day of rest and relaxation. A joyous time to appreciate the wonders of God's creation and His love.

Tuesday 2nd March

Mark 3: 4-6

Jesus said to them, 'Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?' But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Reflection

Religious rules cannot be used as an excuse to avoid helping others. Jesus expects us to show love and compassion. How else do we show we follow Him?

Wednesday 3rd March

Mark 3: 11-12

Whenever the unclean spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before him and shouted, 'You are the Son of God!' But he sternly ordered them not to make him known.

Reflection

Jesus is recognised as God's Son by those who fear Him and have no desire to serve Him. What have we done to show we are His followers and acknowledge Him as Our Lord and Master?

Thursday 4th March

Mark 3: 13-15

Jesus went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons.

Reflection

Jesus wants and calls us all to do special tasks. What specifically is He asking you to do for Him today?

Friday 5th March

Mark 3: 28- 30

“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” — for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Reflection

Those who lie about the holiness of God are far from forgiveness.

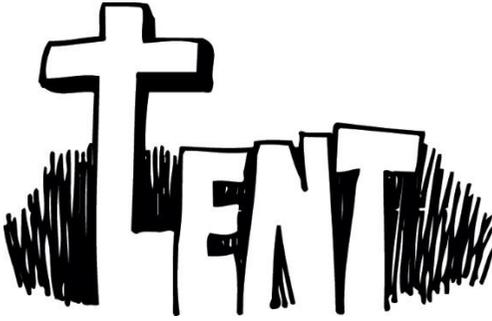
Saturday 6th March

Mark 3: 35

Jesus said, whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

Reflection

We are all members of God’s family. Sometimes our relatives can annoy or upset us, but blood is still thicker than water. The relationship remains.



Family activity Sunday 7th March

Collect together some cushions or pillows.

See if you can stack them up nice and high without them falling over.

It is good to work and it is good to have a day to rest and relax as well.

Take it in turns to take a cushion and say how you can have some rest today.

Pray that we can have balanced lives.

Ask God to help those who have to work too hard.

Thank God for creating the gift of rest.

Lie down with your cushion, and relax...

Monday 8th March

Mark 4: 11

Jesus said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables.

Reflection

A parable leads us deeper, it takes us further. But only if you let it.

Jesus leads you deeper, takes you further, but only if...

Tuesday 9th March

Mark 4: 22

There is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light.

Reflection

In Jesus we see everything; dare you open your eyes?

Wednesday 10th March

Mark 4: 25

“For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.”

Reflection

The context of this short reading is about giving.

The reason “we have” is “to give”, and then God gives us more.

What have you to give?

Thursday 11th March

Mark 5: 17

They began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood

Reflection

Reading about Jesus in the bible I’m not surprised they begged him to leave; Jesus stirred things up politically and in religious life.

Dare we speak of the reality of knowing Christ, or do we hide away in platitudes and clichés?

Friday 12th March

Mark 5: 27-28

A woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well."

Reflection

This woman, hidden in the crowds, was considered unclean and outcast.

In that society she was the least worthy to touch the Messiah, the least worthy to touch even the hem of his cloak.

Yet reach out she did, and healed she was.

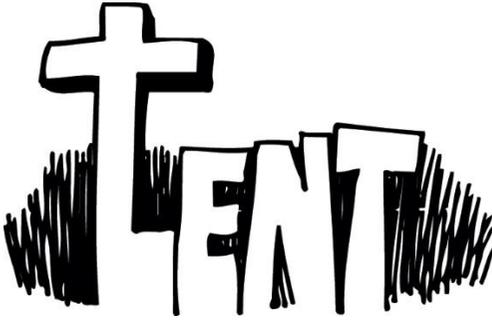
Saturday 13th March

Mark 5:34

Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."

Reflection

Her faith was in Jesus. She is cured. But Jesus doesn't stop there. He stops, he finds her – the one who reached out to him. He speaks to her. His words of acceptance and praise completes her healing. She has been given peace.



Family activity Sunday 14th March

Get some matchsticks, or cocktail sticks or lollipop sticks.

See if you can make a manger from them.

How about a table or chair?

Jesus was a carpenter, he made things from wood.

Look at something wooden, and notice its grain, its feel, its natural beauty.

Pray that we may see the beauty of nature and natural things.

Pray that we may care better for the world's beauty.

Finally make a cross from your matchsticks, and remember that Jesus was killed on a wooden cross to make the world a better place.

Monday 15th March

Mark 6:2-3

On the sabbath Jesus began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offence at him.

Reflection

Jesus was doing no one any harm that day in the synagogue. People then, and people today, want to hear the same old, same old, it makes us comfortable. Jesus was then, and is now telling people something new. Many will take offence.

Tuesday 16th March

Mark 6:4

Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.”

Reflection

I can almost hear people saying ‘Who does he think he is, God Almighty?’ Anyone called to be a prophet today will be similarly ridiculed and vilified in the hope they will run away and shut up. If they don’t take cover they can expect some very rough treatment, as Jesus was about to find out.

Wednesday 17th March

Mark 6:6

Jesus was amazed at their unbelief.

Reflection

Where there is unbelief miracles struggle to happen but where there is even one person with a quiet expectation of God's goodness coming to light, the most remarkable things can and do happen.

Thursday 18th March

Mark 6:12-13

The twelve went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Reflection

They went out believing the power of God was with them. That is what we are called to do.

But it means leaving our comfort zones, daring to walk in the strength of God alone.

Firstly though, we have to recognise our own terrible weakness. That is what repentance means.

Friday 19th March

Mark 6:34

As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Reflection

As sheep without a shepherd wander into danger so does humanity wander without wise leaders; people with compassion willing to put the good of their people above all.

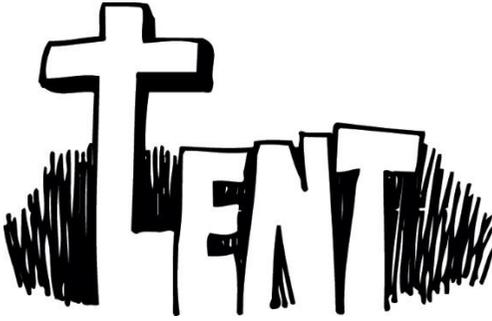
Saturday 20th March

Mark 6:49-50

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Reflection

When we see things we haven't experienced before happening around us, we too are inclined to panic. But listen, hear the voice that reminds us not to be afraid.



Family activity Sunday 15th March

Get a large bowl of water.

Think of lots of ways that we use water – how many can you come up with?

Put your hands slowly into the water. Today water represents fear. What are you afraid of?

Slowly bring your hands out of the water and let the water drip from your fingers.

Sometimes it takes a long time for fear to leave us, just as it takes a long time for the water to finish dripping.

Pray that God may take away our fear.

Pray for those who live in danger, that God and people may protect them.

Finish your prayers by saying Amen as you pour the water out.

Monday 22nd March

Mark 8:31

Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Reflection

A change of emphasis, as Jesus looks towards what lies ahead, and the Cross. Good teachers change our views, widen our outlooks. It's easy to resist, and the disciples struggle to accept change. Do we find change easy? Can we let go of cherished ways of thinking?

Tuesday 23rd March

Mark 8:34

Jesus called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Reflection

Jesus calls us to a narrow path, one where the Cross cannot be eliminated. Christian living could be the call "...not to the easiest, but to the most difficult...not to the most gratifying, but to the less pleasant" (St John of the Cross).

What might be difficult for you?

Wednesday 24th March

Mark 9:31-32

Jesus was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Reflection

For the second time, Jesus mentions his approaching death. Yet the disciples are arguing about which of them is the most important! Are our wishes, views, ambitions worthy of close scrutiny? Can we be humble enough to accept the grace to change?

Thursday 25th March

Mark 10:29-30

Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.”

Reflection

This pandemic has caused us all to re-assess what matters most, in our lives, values, friendships. Today’s reading is about eternity, grasping the big picture. What brings you real joy? Can you live life more simply? Where, and to whom, can we show that mercy God has shown us?

Friday 26th March

Mark 10:45

For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Reflection

Yet again Jesus speaks of his impending death. Yet again his disciples are arguing about which of them will gain the greatest blessing. So, Jesus has to spell it out: true leadership is about humility, sacrifice, selfless service. Can we serve without seeking attention?

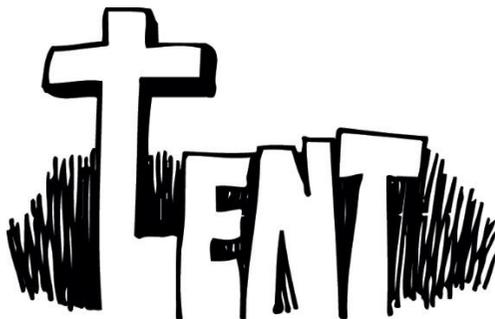
Saturday 27th March

Mark 11:7

They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it.

Reflection

This week, Jesus has been changing the way we think. As he prepares to enter Jerusalem, on a “borrowed” donkey, unused to have been ridden on by anyone, we follow. And we ask Jesus: what do you want me to change?



Family activity Palm Sunday, 28th March

Get some newspapers, roll them up, cut the tops and roll them down to make trees.

Make a path with the trees along it on your table.

Now tear off some of the 'branches' and lay them on the path.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem the crowd shouted hosanna and put branches on the road. Act this out using an object or your fingers to represent Jesus riding into Jerusalem, while everyone else cheers and makes a loud noise.

Pray that we may celebrate Jesus in our towns and in our homes.



Monday 29th March

Mark 11:8-10

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Reflection

As we enter Holy Week, we remember that Jesus was welcomed as the Messiah into Jerusalem. In a few days that cheering crowd would be calling for His death.

Why?

Tuesday 30th March

Mark 11:15-17

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'?

But you have made it a den of robbers."

Reflection

I am reminded of our great cathedrals where an entrance fee is charged. How do we balance the requirement for God's house to be freely open to all with the need to raise funds to maintain it?

Wednesday 31st March

Mark 11:18-19

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

Reflection

How could they want to kill Jesus? They were afraid because Jesus was challenging their comfortable existence. When we are afraid, we sometimes act cruelly to defend ourselves. Would we have felt the same?

Maundy Thursday 1st April

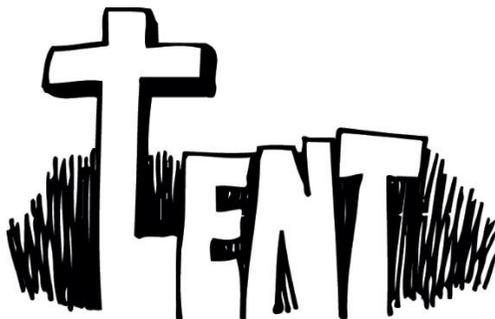
Mark 14:22-25

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Reflection

Today we thank God for the gift of the Eucharist. Jesus gives Himself to us and we are nourished and strengthened for our tasks.

We remember those whom we have loved who now share in the heavenly banquet.



Family activity Maundy Thursday 1st April

Get a large bowl of water and a towel.

Take it in turns to wash each other's feet or hands, and to dry them gently.

Remember the time when Jesus washed his disciples' feet.

Pray that we may learn to do things for each with love, and without a fuss.

Good Friday 2nd April

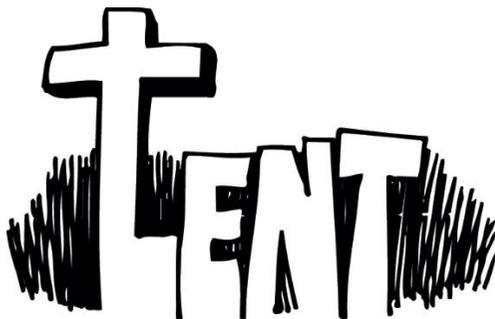
Mark 15:25-27

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Jesus. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.

Reflection

The darkest day. Jesus is executed as a common criminal between two thieves. However dark and sordid things are, Jesus is there - we are never alone in our distress.

Today we pray for those who pay the ultimate price for following God.



Family activity Good Friday 2nd April

Boil some eggs (if you haven't got any, ask Fr Simon for some).

Eat them (or empty them) very carefully leaving as much of the shell unbroken as you can.

The shell represents the tomb. Jesus' body is placed inside, some people are sad for him outside.

Using felt-tips (or paint) see if you can draw people on the outside (easier) and Jesus on the inside (this is tricky).

Jesus was strong, but he made himself weak – just like this eggshell. He did this for us.

Decide where you will put your eggshells, and spend a moment remembering the story of Jesus dying on the cross.

Leave your eggs there until Easter Sunday.

Holy Saturday 3rd April

Mark 15:46-47

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

Reflection

Joseph did what had to be done. The long Sabbath followed when work was not allowed, not even to finish preparing the body of Jesus for burial.

Many mourners are heartbroken that the normal things could not happen during the pandemic.

We will remember and pay tribute when we can.

Easter Sunday 4th April

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

**Lord Jesus Christ, you gave your life that we might live.
May we rejoice in your resurrection, and follow you in
the way that leads to eternal life. Amen.**

Mark 16.6

The angel said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.”

Reflection

There is no more darkness and sorrow because Jesus has risen from the tomb and defeated death and the power of evil forever. Without that totally unexpected event there would not have been Christianity – it’s that simple.

Alleluia!

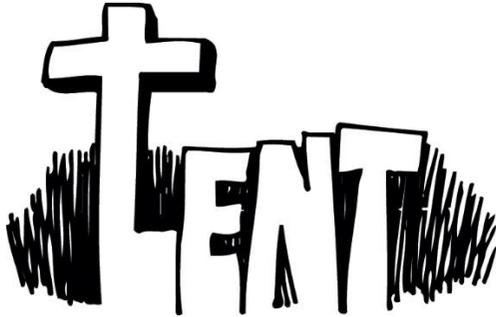
Then

Then you may wish to make your own prayers in response, or simply be still and know that the risen Lord is with you and within you.

The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

**May the risen Christ grant us the joys of eternal life.
Alleluia! Amen.**



Family activity Easter Sunday 4th April

Get your eggshells from wherever you put them.

Today the tomb is empty, and people are happy.

Decide how you want to show this, you could

1. Crush the shell into tiny little pieces
2. Colour over Jesus in a bright colour, and turn the sad people's faces into happy ones.

Now get some Easter Egg (if you haven't got any, ask Fr Simon).

Jesus is alive – he has new life.

Easter Eggs are a sign of Jesus' new life.

He gives that life to you – so eat some Easter Egg!

Lenten Road Map

