

This Month's Liturgy: March 2024

The whole of the month of March this year is taken up with the Lenten journey, not merely a time to 'give things up' as if the Season was no more than an assault course to be conquered, but rather a time of growth and development in our spiritual lives. This growth finds its external expression sometimes in self denial but also in the deliberate **taking on** of acts of kindness, thoughtfulness and compassion. These are the true 'fruits' of our Lenten journey.

Baptism is the first Sacrament we receive – it roots and grounds us in the community of Faith, even if sometimes its external effects can be slow to appear. It is because of Baptism that we engage in our Lenten journey each year: we want to accompany those who are seeking to become members of the Family of Faith through the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter, through Baptism, Confirmation and the sharing of the holy gift of the Eucharist – and because we want to accompany them we know that the best inspiration and support we can give them is that we ourselves live a more authentically Christian life.

Rooting ourselves in our relationship with God (**Prayer**), taking nothing for granted but recognising that all is gift (**Fasting**) and giving of ourselves in loving support to others (**Almsgiving**) these are the traditional and time-proven means of engaging fully and well in our Lenten period. All is done however not merely so we can tick a box and feel happy that we have 'succeeded' in keeping a good Lent but so that when we arrived at the Triduum of the Lord's suffering, death and Resurrection we will have been purified and drawn ever deeper into what Saint Paul refers to as having 'the mind of Christ' – Christ's way of thinking, of loving and of acting.

By doing this – bit by bit, year by year, Lent by Lent we become more authentically those 'ambassadors for Christ' of whom Saint Paul speaks and therefore also a real support, inspiration and travelling companion to those seeking the full Communion of the Church and its mission.

I wish you a fruitful and happy Lent

Father Philip