

During Lent we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter. It is especially a time to celebrate reconciliation - the Sacrament of Penance - in readiness for celebrating God's gift of new life that comes to us in Christ.

Ash Wednesday

We begin this season of sorrow and mercy with the blessing and distribution of ashes. They will be ritually washed away in the new waters of the Easter Vigil. On 14 February Mass will be at 10.00 am at St Joseph's, Nympsfield, and 7.00 pm at St Dominic's, Dursley

Come Follow Me

These Lent Study Groups will meet weekly for six weeks in St Dominic's Presbytery. We shall follow the programme 'Come, Follow Me: Group reflections on the Joy of the Gospel'.

Each session will be based on a passage from the New Testament - a chance for members to share and talk about our faith. Members will be given a small booklet which contains not only the material for each session, but also some reflections and prayers to use at home.

Parallel groups will run on Monday evenings at 7.30pm (12, 19 and 26 Feb. 5, 12, and 19 March) and Tuesday mornings 10.30am (13, 20 and 27 Feb. 6, 13 and 20 March).

Stations of the Cross

At St Joseph's, Nympsfield, on Thursdays at 2.30 pm; at St Dominic's on Fridays at 6.30 pm.

Also called the Way of the Cross, the object of this devotion is to help Christians make a spiritual pilgrimage through contemplating Jesus' last journey. It grew out of imitation of the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, believed to be the actual path Jesus walked to Calvary.

Originating in pilgrimages to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, it spread to Europe. The Franciscans began to erect outdoor shrines to duplicate their counterpart in Jerusalem. The number of stations varied between seven and thirty. In 1731 Pope Clement XII gave all churches the right to have such stations and fixed the number at fourteen.

CAFOD Family Fast Day

Friday 23 February. Fasting can be immensely powerful - giving us the space to open our ears and hearts to God's call. We should care that so many in the world go hungry.

Use the envelopes to bring what you save through fasting to church on Sunday. The government has promised to double our donations to CAFOD during Lent, so this is a wonderful opportunity to make a real difference to more of our brothers and sisters.

Station Mass at St Dominic's

Friday 23 February at 7.00pm. This Lent, Station Masses around our diocese give us a chance to join with others and help us enter into the themes of the Year of Mission. These stations - which developed from ancient custom in Rome - are about pilgrimage, flavoured by Lenten penance, and a longing for God.

The icon of St Mark will pass from one station to another around the diocese. We ask St Mark's intercession that the Church of Clifton will reach out to others with the good news of Christ's love.

Before our Station Mass there will be a period of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and a celebration of Evening Prayer.

Reconciliation Service

Bishop Declan will lead a Reconciliation Service for local parishes at the Immaculate Conception, Stroud, on Thursday 8 March at 7.00 pm. This will include the opportunity for individual confession.

Churches Together Lent Services

These united services all follow the theme of "Hope" and all take place at the Methodist Church at 6.00pm.

Feb 18 Rev Fiona Crocker
Feb 25 Rev Simon Helme
March 4 Rev Philip Beisly
March 11 Rev Phil Summers
March 18 Rev Michael Cozens

The Seven Last Words

On Palm Sunday, March 25, in St Dominic's, in aid of 'Listening Post, our parish charity for 2018. The Seven Last Words of our Saviour on the Cross is based on Reflections by Cardinal Basil Hume, with the String Quartets by Joseph Haydn. We are grateful to the Coln Music Group for adding Dursley to the parishes they are visiting for this special Lent Service. There will be refreshments in the hall afterwards.

Chrism Mass

This year's Chrism Mass is on Wednesday 28 March at 11.00 am in Clifton Cathedral. This is one of the great diocesan gatherings of the year. Priests and deacons renew their vows, and the Bishop blesses the holy oils. There is a list for places on the coach from St Dominic's.

Best Lent Ever

Are you tired of giving up chocolate for Lent? Does it *really* do anything for your life of faith or your spiritual life?

This new online series seeks to accompany us on our Lenten journey. Each day an email is sent to you with a short video clip as a way of allowing you to enter into the Season of Lent, allowing us to celebrate Lent in a fulfilling and different way.

Log onto to *Dynamic Catholic* to sign up for your Lenten journey with a difference: www.dynamiccatholic.com/best-lentever.