

Lent at Holy Cross, 2008



As a parish, we will attempt to achieve specific goals this Lent, which starts on **Ash Wednesday**, 6th February, which is a very early start compared to some years. Our goals are two-fold. The **first goal** is to leaflet some areas of the parish with an invitation to come to the church on specified dates with a view to seeing the buildings, meeting people and hearing about the Christian faith today during the final two weeks of Lent which are 2nd March-16th March.

We will ask members of the congregation to leaflet some streets with the invitations and then for some of them to be

present in the Church on the dates specified for the invitation. The Church is a major asset to us as Christians. It has stood there for hundreds of years and is a mine of wonderful artefacts and symbols of our faith. It would be wise to use it for the purpose for which it was always intended- to glorify God. Their role will be to support the project by talking to people, showing them around the interesting architectural features, which of course, all speak about the Christian faith. We will also need a team serving refreshments and people being there for the talk about our faith which will be offered to those who accept the invitation. The idea is that if there any people interested in looking further into the possibility of continuing at Holy Cross Church, then those present will form a welcoming group, helping the new people over the Church's threshold and into our common life. It would be good if current members of the congregation could continue in this welcoming role for a time to ensure that the new people really feel at home.

But before this, our **second goal** is to prepare as a congregation for the visitors by refreshing our vision of the Christian faith and our life as a Church community. To that end, the first four weeks of Lent will present opportunities for people to study and think and pray in groups together. A study pack will be prepared. It is hoped that there will be a good response to this opportunity, both because of our Lent project and also because in the challenging multi-faith world in which we all now live, we need to know more, share doubts, explore issues about our faith so that we are personally confident and open to any discussions.

Ash Wednesday

It is always a good plan to start Lent with attending Mass on Ash Wednesday if at all possible. The powerful symbolism of the Ash Wednesday ritual touches profoundly all human needs and hopes, joys and sorrows. Palm crosses from the previous year are burned and ground down to provide ash for the ashing ceremony. The symbols involve the feelings of empty triumph and inner triumph which are in evidence on Palm Sunday and which are turned on their heads by the reality of Christ's real identity and purpose.

As we receive the ash, we know our human finitude very deeply. "Dust you are and to dust you shall return." And yet we also know the reality of being inspired by the spirit of the living God who transforms us by breathing new life into our old selves. Mass with ashing at 7am and 8pm –Old Church

Individual processes may be helpful

1) Private reading

Some people find reading a thought-provoking book, whether specifically about faith or otherwise, a good way of observing Lent. It starts off a reflective mood and can encourage good habits.

2) A Lenten partner

Some people have found working with a partner for 6 weeks is a great help. They may just sit and talk about their lives or read the same book and talk about it. If the idea appeals to you, just ask a friend to be your Lenten partner and arrange dates.

I hope that your Lent is a profoundly good experience and enhances your celebration of Easter in 2008.

LENT LUNCHES, 2008

Lent Lunches are an expression of our Lenten discipline as a Christian congregation.

We use them to fulfil three aims:-

- 1) to be together to deepen our faith and awareness of God's word and world;
- 2) to give alms to assist others in need - this year, we are supporting the London Diocese Appeal **for the Churches of Angola and Mozambique.**
- 3) to serve each other's needs in preparing simple food and sharing it with guests.

Lunch is served from about 12 noon to about 1pm and all are welcome to lunch and the activities.

SATURDAY	ACTIVITY TO ENJOY AROUND LUNCH THAT DAY
9th February	11.30am "Spring into Poetry" – a selection of old and new works to celebrate the progress of Spring and Lent, 2008. Everyone is invited to come and read their own poem or a favourite poem. Old Church.
16th February	10.00am A Visit to the people and Parish Church of St. Mary, Northolt, our ancient neighbouring Church and its people will welcome us and show us round, and then we will come back to Holy Cross for lunch.
23rd February	10.00am A Visit from the people of St. Mary, Northolt. We will show them round Holy Cross Church and meet the people and then invite them to lunch with us at 12 noon.
1st March	11.00am A talk on our Lenten charity ALMA by Sheenagh Burrell, Alma Communications Officer. In the Old Church.
8th March	10am- noon A visit to The Litten Nature Reserve where we will be pond-dipping, looking at trees, and learning about the earth thanks to the Reserve Friends Secretary Beryl Pankhurst. Light refreshments will be available. Families and people of all ages welcome. Meet at the Reserve.
15th March	11.00am Krystyna Palamarchuk and some members of the congregation, perform a concert in the New Church. Don't be late!



St. Mary the Virgin, Northolt



Holy Cross, Greenford Magna