

Lent is a time for believing, for welcoming God into our lives and allowing him to “make his dwelling” among us (cf. *Jn* 14:23). Fasting involves being freed from all that weighs us down – like consumerism or an excess of information, whether true or false – in order to open the doors of our hearts to the One who comes to us, poor in all things, yet “full of grace and truth” (*Jn* 1:14): the Son of God our Saviour.

2. *Hope as “living water” enabling us to continue our journey.*

In these times of trouble, when everything seems fragile and uncertain, it may appear challenging to speak of hope. Yet Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God who patiently continues to care for his creation which we have often mistreated (cf. *Laudato Si’*, 32-33; 43-44). Saint Paul urges us to place our hope in reconciliation: “Be reconciled to God” (2 *Cor* 5:20)...

In Lent, may we be increasingly concerned with “speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement, and not words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 223). In order to give hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, to be “willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference”.

3. *Love, following in the footsteps of Christ, in concern and compassion for all, is the highest expression of our faith and hope.*

Love is a gift that gives meaning to our lives. It enables us to view those in need as members of our own family, as friends, brothers or sisters. A small amount, if given with love, becomes a source of life and happiness... Such is the case too with our almsgiving, whether small or large, when offered with joy and simplicity.

To experience Lent with love means caring for those who suffer or feel abandoned and fearful because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In these days of deep uncertainty about the future, let us keep in mind the Lord’s word to his Servant, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you” (*Is* 43:1). In our charity, may we speak words of reassurance and help others to realize that God loves them as sons and daughters.

Dear brothers and sisters, every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping and loving. The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father.

Pope Francis.

May Mary, Mother of the Saviour, ever faithful at the foot of the cross and in the heart of the Church, sustain us with her loving presence. May the blessing of the risen Lord accompany all of us on our journey towards the light of Easter.

1st SUNDAY OF LENT 21st FEBRUARY

PRIEST ON DUTY: FR. FRANK GARVEY P.P. 071-9620118

ST.MARY'S Sunday 10am:Charlie Lavin (Anniv)

Joe & Julia Regan (Anniv) Shannon Lodge

Ian Burke (3rd Anniv)

Ciaran Flynn (3rd Anniv)

MASSES FROM MONDAY 22nd -SATURDAY 27th FEBRUARY

Monday 8pm: Deceased families in Townspark, St Patrick’s Park, Breffni Crescent, Breffni Heights, Kingston Terrace and Lisnagot.

Tuesday 10am: Private Intention

Wednesday 10am: Cait & Patrick Cummins and John Beirne

Thursday 10am: Michael & Annie Glancy, their daughter-in-law Mary, and Frank O’ Brien.

Friday 8pm: Tommie McWeeney (2nd Anniv)

Sat 10am: James and Mary Cummins and their daughters Helen and Ann.

MASS FOR SUNDAY 28th FEBRUARY

Sunday 10am: Farrell McElgunn (1st Anniv)

Jimmy Stenson (2nd Anniv)

Bridget Elmsflie (1st Anniv)

John and Eileen Farrell and grandson Fergal Whelan (birthday remembrance).

DEATHS: We pray for the happy repose of the soul of Eileen McGrory (Amber Court, formerly Lisnagot) who died recently. May she rest in peace.

THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY: of Ireland are currently recruiting for a Home Care Worker in the Ballinamore/Carrick-On-Shannon and surrounding areas. For more information please contact Clair Culkin on 085-8720043.

Lent: a Time for Renewing Faith, Hope and Love

Fasting, prayer and almsgiving, as preached by Jesus (cf. *Mt* 6:1-18), enable and express our conversion. The path of poverty and self-denial (*fasting*), concern and loving care for the poor (*almsgiving*), and childlike dialogue with the Father (*prayer*) make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope and effective charity.

1. *Faith calls us to accept the truth and testify to it.*

In this Lenten season, *accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ* means, first of all, opening our hearts to God’s word, which the Church passes on from generation to generation...