

## Our Faith

### Almsgiving

Almsgiving has always been an important part of Lent. It is important to give ourselves the experience of fasting from being un-generous. Generosity is not simply giving excess clothes to a place where poor people might purchase them. It's not even writing a generous cheque for charity. These are wonderful practices, but generosity is really an attitude. Generosity is a recognition that everything we have is a gift, a gift given to be shared. Generosity means that sharing with others in need is a priority. That is quite different from assessing our own needs first, and then giving away what is left over. A spirit of selfless giving means that one of our deepest needs is to share with others. Lent is a wonderful time to practice selfless giving. This kind of self-sacrificing generosity is a religious experience. It places us in solidarity with the poor who share with each other, without having any excess. It also joins us with Jesus, who gave himself completely, for us on the cross. Establishing new patterns of giving will give real life and joy to Lent.

#### From the Fathers

'There are two different roads, one broad and easy, the other hard and narrow. And there are two guides vying with each other to attract the traveller's attention... life is an amalgam of vice and virtue... The life of the sinner presents all the pleasures of the present moment; the life of the righteous points to future benefits. The easy undisciplined way of life leads to pleasure to be enjoyed now, not later; the way of salvation is hard in the present, but promises a beautiful future.'

From Commentary on Psalm 1 by St Basil the Great, (c. 330-379, bishop, theologian)

#### Prayers to Remember

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent, Book of Common Prayer (1662)

28th February  
2021 The Second Sunday  
of Lent

### Change



What needs to be changed in my life? The first step towards answering that question is asking for help. "Lord, help me to know what needs changing." But remember, it is often said "Be careful about what you ask for." This is one of those requests that God must surely want to answer because it will bring us closer to him.

Then, we have to listen. With a little bit of reflection, most of us will just begin to "name" things that make up our ordinary habits and ways of being who we are, that we aren't very proud of. Things we do and things we never get around to doing – *'we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done'*. We may feel the call to change our attitudes, our self-absorption, or our way of interacting with others. Perhaps a spouse, a loved one, a friend, a family member or fellow worker has told you something about yourself that gets in the way of communication, or makes your relationship with them difficult.

Maybe you no longer take God very seriously. You go to Church on Sunday, and 'do you bit', but don't really take time to deal with your relationship with God. Perhaps you've allowed your mind to get cluttered with urgent tasks and you can't find the time or energy for prayer. You might begin to name a number of self-indulgent habits. You may realise you rarely, if ever, hear the cry of the poor, and can't remember when you last responded to their need. It could be that dishonesty has become a way of life. One of the roadblocks in your relationship with God and others may be deep wounds or resentments from the past, things you continue to hold against others or yourself. Lent is the time to ask the Holy Spirit to show you where your life needs to change so you can enjoy a deeper relationship with him and with others.