

Dear Friends

Way back, when serving as an army chaplain in Cyprus, I and my colleague were invited to a feast. It was to celebrate the arrival at a local monastery of certain relics – bones of a martyr – from a Greek island. We weren't allowed to enter the 'Holy of Holies' to see the depositing of the relics but we were able to be at the service of celebration outside the chapel beforehand. Brian and I looked forward to the feast: if you have ever enjoyed a holiday in Greece or Cyprus and eaten delicious meals al fresco, you'll know what I mean. In the event, there was no wine, and we were each presented with an octopus on a plate. I mean a whole octopus. I spent the next few minutes trying to work out how to start eating it. How does one cut open an octopus? There was a simple reason for this situation: the celebration was taking place during Lent: when, in the Orthodox tradition, neither meat nor wine are consumed. (I suspect that in practice they are, but not at a church function.)

Perhaps you give up meat in Lent, or alcohol (if you ever use it) or chocolate. It is the one great fast of the Church, after all. I have been invited to spend a day fasting during Ramadan, which takes place in March this year. Now that is really a fast: we shall allow nothing past our lips except water, until the sun goes down. After that we shall be able to eat what we like. Christians are no strangers to fasting, though tend to speak of 'fasting and prayer'. One name that comes to mind is that of Mother Julian of Norwich, who lived a life of fasting with prayer, having shut herself away for forty years in a cell attached to a church which now bears her name. Her life of prayer and fasting inspired thoughts such as these (forgive the dated language):

For our soul is so deep-grounded in God, and so endlessly treasured, that we may not come to the meaning thereof, till we have first knowing of God, who is the maker to whom it is owed.

God of thy goodness keep me unto thyself, for thou art enough for me; and I may ask nothing that is less...only in thee I have all.

I saw that our Lord God is to us everything that is good and comfortable to our help. He is our clothing that for love wrappeth and windeth us, and...hangeth about us for tender love, that he may never leave us.

We don't need to shut ourselves away in Lent, or starve ourselves, or deny ourselves a roast lunch. It is, however, a time to take stock, to give time to God, to listen for his word, to make a fresh start, to forgive and be forgiven, and to prepare for whatever God has next for us. To see the world through God's eyes, in fact. God bless and have a good Lent.

Peter

Resources/Good News

On the next page, find details of Lent Reflections taking place around the Circuit.



LENT REFLECTIONS



Trinity Methodist Church & Rev Sam
invite you to share in our

- Lent Reflections -

on Zoom on the following dates:
1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd March
from 5.30pm to 6pm.

'Drop in', 'Chill out' and give yourself
some time and space to reflect on all
that God has done for us, through
Jesus, by the Holy Spirit.

All are welcome!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82784901109?pwd=Q040WUhpL3NNazBRcFpYbEMvRFNjdz09>

Meeting ID: 827 8490 1109 and Passcode: 405162

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82784901109?pwd=Q040WUhpL3NNazBRcFpYbEMvRFNjdz09>

SAVE THE DATES!

UNBOUNDED LOVE

God's love
doesn't stay
in the lines



A series of Lent Reflections inspired by
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
St Mary's Quarry St GUI 3UP
Thursdays 15 & 22 February, 7, 14 & 21 March
12.30 – 13.30: followed by a bread and soup lunch