



R.E. News

Dear R.E. Coordinator/Teacher/Chaplain,

Welcome to the Lenten edition of R.E. news. This year we celebrate Ash Wednesday on March 5th 2025. Under the images of the great Lenten Gospels we could acknowledge as our own, the thirst of the woman at the well, the blindness of the man Jesus alone could heal, and the dying and rising of Lazarus. Lent invites us to look at our own lives, know our own needs and be aware of our need for Jesus, who could quench thirst, open eyes and deliver from death.

Inside this edition I have included worksheets, prayer services diocesan news and much more.

Please forward any material for future editions of R.E. News to postprimaryre@tuamarchdiocese.org

Kind Regards,
Tomás Kenny
Post-Primary Diocesan Advisor



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LENT 2025

Lent coincides with springtime and in fact the word itself probably comes from the Old English *lencten*, meaning the lengthening of the days that occurs in spring.



And indeed spring is not a bad image for Lent. Spring is the time of new life when the long nights of winter become a thing of the past. It is a time when the hearts of many people lift. Lent offers the possibility to renew and reawaken the life of the spirit and so is a season of joy. This presents us with a new image of Lent, Lent is not a time of darkness and hardship, it is like Advent, a season of renewal and joy as we await Easter.

What will we do during Lent?

The Benedictine monk, Columba McCann outlines a number of suggestions for Lent. He highlights that we should present students with a number of concrete ideas for how they might live this season. Daily Mass was once popular but this may not work with teenagers today! There are other liturgical and spiritual resources to be introduced to students. In fact, post-primary schools are very much experts on the liturgical season of Lent as they already take part in sponsored fasts and justice programmes. It's simply a matter of building on what you already do and trying to enrich this year after year. Columba McCann suggests:

- ◆ Third World Aid
- ◆ Sponsored Fasts
- ◆ Stations of the Cross
- ◆ Pilgrimage.

A helpful idea, when preparing liturgy in Lent is to focus on a prayer service for those preparing for Christian initiation, namely Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion. Why not tie in with local primary schools and see how maybe first and second years could engage with this. Very often when students come to post-primary school they lose the connection with the sacraments as they don't prepare for same throughout their time in Post Primary school. Some people suggest Confirmation shouldn't happen until fourth year..!

Making a very visual sign of preparation and celebration of Lent is possible in all post-primary schools. Focusing on ashes, focus on the various Sunday gospels from the Lenten season and try to draw parallels with what's going on in our lives today.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1



Watch the video from the link below and fill in the blanks on the comprehension below.

[CLICK HERE](#) for video on Ash Wednesday

The Meaning of Ash Wednesday

Even though so many Catholics go to Mass on Ash Wednesday, it is not a Holy Day of -
 Ash Wednesday marks the first day of the forty day period
 leading up to....., but if you were to actually count them you would find
 that there are actually.....days during the season of Lent. This is because we don't count
 As a part of the forty days of Lent. This day, the Lord's Day, is a
 celebration of the Resurrection and new life and therefore not a day for fasting.

Why do we wear ashes on Ash Wednesday? When we receive the ashes we hear "Remember
 that you are....., and to you shall return." This is to help us
 recognise that all we have is afrom God.

Ashes were a sign ofin the Old Testament. In the early Church, the Order
 ofwore ashes as a sign of their penance. In a similar way, John the
 Called for repentance and baptism in preparation for the Kingdom of God.
 This is why we may also hear the words "Turn away from..... and be faithful to the
 Gospel" when we receive the ashes on our foreheads.

EXPLORATION OF IDEAS

Changes Lenten practices in Ireland over the last century.

- Today fasting and abstinence is observed only on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
- Previously sackcloth and ashes were a symbol of repentance in the Old Testament. At first the Church used them for public penance. From the 10th century it became a custom for all Christians to get ashes on their foreheads for the first day of Lent.
- Today penance and repentance is a matter for each individual's conscience. The emphasis is not so much on denial as on doing better, praying more, giving to others and trying to live better lives as disciples of Jesus. We have to take responsibility individually for deciding on our own forms of penance.
- In the early Church baptism was usually received by adults. The season of Lent was used as a preparation time for baptism. Some of the prayers in the Lenten masses have references to this. At the Vigil ceremony on Holy Saturday night we are all invited to renew our baptismal promises.
- The Irish Bishops invite us to take part in a communal form of almsgiving. They send out *Trócaire* boxes to all homes and places of work. We are encouraged to put the money spared by our penance into the boxes. The word *Trócaire* means 'mercy' or caring. *Trócaire* is an Irish aid organisation. It is one of the many organisations who send aid to the developing world.



To Do:

Interview an older person you know and ask them about their experience of Lent in their youth. List the changes you notice between the Lenten season today and some years ago.



THE CELTIC SEASON OF IMBOLC



In the modern Irish Calendar, Imbolc is variously known as the Feast of Saint Brigid (Secondary Patron of Ireland), Lá Fhéile Bríde, and Lá Feabhra — the first day of Spring. Christians may call the day "Candlemas" or "the feast of the Purification of the Virgin."

One folk tradition that continues in certain places on St. Brigid's Day (or Imbolc) is that of the Brigid's Bed. The girls and young, unmarried women of the household or village create a corn dolly to represent Brigid, called the Brideog ("little Brigid" or "young Brigid"), adorning it with ribbons and baubles like shells or stones. They make a bed for the Brideog to lie in. On St. Brigid's Eve (January 31), the girls and young women gather together in one house to stay up all night with the Brideog, and are later visited by all the young men of the community who must ask permission to

SPRING-TIME WORDSEARCH



FRIENDS
SUN
BLUESKY
FREEDOM
WILDLIFE
PEACE
STREAM
FLOWERS
INSECTS
HAPPINESS
LOVE
VACATION
PLAY
JOY
ADVENTURES

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 2

Lent with K4J

s r c o n f e s s i o n s n g
 n e g s j q t r k e o p a y c
 r y o o n e k t x i f i c r l
 o a d m o o z z x o l p r e u
 h r b y k d i i r s m x i v a
 t p c t h s f t q l p s f b n
 f n r d u i y r a k t o i c u
 o z w s c d x c i t i z c r g
 n d e u a c n l k d s d e o d
 w j r y c i l o h t a c r s a
 o c s a s h e s b q r y e s b
 r t n e l c w v d i w z r q y
 c h i b y r j r o y b j g j a
 x t w v r y z v z l i l d l c
 i i p w u b k h v w k q e g p

Hidden Words:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Ashes | Good Friday |
| Bible | Jesus |
| Catholic | Lent |
| Confession | Love |
| Cross | Nails |
| Crown of Thorns | Prayer |
| Crucifixion | Sacrifice |
| Forty Days | Stations |

Directions: Find all of the hidden words about
 Lent in the puzzle!



LITURGICAL IDEAS FOR LENT

Create your space in the classroom or in the assembly/reception area of the school with coloured cloths....Use images or symbols of family in the space to remind us that we encounter God in our families and how we live in family reflects our love of God. Remember that family is not just parents and children – everyone is part of a family: children, adult siblings, single people, parents, older people. Place a large purple candle in the space – this candle will move each week depending on which image you wish to highlight.... The phrase, *We are all God's family*, is placed within the space, or could be hung on the backdrop.

Each week we will be adding a focus for how we might show love in our families. In order to keep the space from getting cluttered, move the sayings after each week. They could be placed on the backdrop or at the back of the space. What you are aiming for is a space that has a new invitation or emphasis each week.....so that we build up a sense in your school of what it means to be a Christian, what it means to be family, shown by the way we love one another. When you put in the new phrases, choose a different spot each week in the sacred space, and place the purple candle beside the phrase.

First Sunday/Week of Lent

Place in the space the following phrases:

In large, *Love is patient*

In a smaller size, *Jesus is patient with us. Pray for the grace to be more patient. How can I be more patient with others?*

Place some nightlights in a basket and invite students to take one as they pray for someone in their family with whom they need to show patience.

LITURGICAL IDEAS FOR LENT CTD.

Second Sunday of Lent

Place in the space the following phrases:

In large, *Love is kind*

In a smaller size, *Jesus shows kindness to all. Give of your time, love and belongings to others. Who needs kindness in our family?*

Invite students to share their time and kindness with someone outside of their family this week.

Third Sunday of Lent

Place in the space the following phrases:

In large, *Love is not envious, boastful, arrogant or rude*

In a smaller size, *God is love. Pray for a loving heart. How can I show love to others? Give the cost of your lunch to Trócaire.*

Place the Trócaire box in the reflection space and pictures of families in the developing world.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Place in the space, the following phrases:

In large, *Love is not irritable or resentful*

In a smaller size, *Jesus shows love to all. I pray for those I resent and I fast from irritability. Spend time with someone who irritates you....notice their gifts and abilities.*

Place a basket in the space and invite students to write a prayer giving thanks to God for those who have been like a mother to them.

LITURGICAL IDEAS FOR LENT CTD.



Fifth Sunday of Lent

Place in the space, the following phrases:

In large, *Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth*

In a smaller size, *Jesus loves truth. Fast for all who suffer injustice. Pray for all in despair.*

Leave a basket with small stones in the space and invite students to take a stone home with them as they pray for those who suffer injustice in the family of humanity.

Palm Sunday

Place in the space, the following phrases:

In large, *Love endures all things*

In a smaller size, *Jesus loves us to the end. Fast with Jesus. Pray with Jesus. Give to Jesus.*

Leave a basket of wooden splinters and invite students to take one as they remember the cross of different members of their families and parish community...and Jesus' way of the Cross.



CLASSROOM AVTIVITY 3

Lent

W Q K P G N I T S A F P K V K F L
 P O A S H W E D N E S D A Y C Z R
 S N R E C I F I R C A S T N R K L
 R S L R V Z K Y N B N N S N U K B
 H C E W O F X P G N E E M O C E D
 M R P N H S J B G L H F X I I E N
 C X C N E F Y N P S T P G T F W J
 V R G W B V I M A P E R N A I Y Q
 T N O B M R I P T A P A I I X L J
 P R H S P N T G S H M Y V L I O K
 L E L S S Q P T R R K E I I O H W
 B N N L Q R E F M O K R G C N V B
 Z X N A E R G K T C F K S N H R C
 B R N P N R F B L T C F M O C K K
 T K A F B C J N K L K K L C P M Q
 W R N M Y L E X C R Q C A E L V J
 E L M E D I T A T I O N Y R Q F C


almsgiving
 ashes
 ash wednesday
 cross
 crucifixion
 easter
 fasting
 forgiveness
 holy week

lent
 meditation
 penance
 prayer
 prepare
 reconciliation
 sacrifice
 sorrow
 spring

CLASSROOM AVTIVITY 4

N	A	C	E	T	D	E	V	A	S
A	M	O	T	R	U	T	H	N	E
E	A	N	N	E	E	F	I	L	S
C	T	D	E	S	T	C	V	I	U
N	H	E	P	E	O	S	E	E	F
E	G	M	R	D	E	M	U	S	E
T	I	N	E	N	A	V	I	V	R
N	L	M	S	N	A	L	I	V	A
E	U	E	V	E	I	L	E	B	E
S	S	E	N	K	R	A	D	B	F

NICODEMUS	SERPENT	DESERT
LIFE	CONDEMN	SAVED
REFUSES	SENTENCE	LIGHT
DARKNESS	EVIL	TRUTH



CLASSROOM AVTIVITY 5

Lenten Quiz:

- 1) Exactly how many days are there in between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday?
 - A) 40
 - B) 46
 - C) 50
 - D) 37

- 2) Which day of the week is not included as a part of the forty days of Lent?
 - A) Sunday
 - B) Monday
 - C) Tuesday
 - D) Friday

- 3) What sacrament is especially significant on Easter Sunday?
 - A) Holy Orders
 - B) Baptism
 - C) Matrimony
 - D) Confirmation

4) What do we wear ashes on Ash Wednesday?

ALTERNATE PRAYER FOR LENT Prepared by Tomás Kenny

Opening Hymn: Lord of all Hopefulness (Traditional)

Opening Prayer (Read by Student/Leader of Prayer)

Dear God, we gather around our sacred space, let us give thanks for all our families. Families come in all shapes and sizes. Help us to see the beauty of our families and appreciate how they make us who we are. Most of all, we thank you God, for welcoming us into your family and for letting us be called your children.

Reflection 1 - The Holy Family

Reader 1: After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Reader 2: (Light Candle One – optional instrumental music)

Help us to show love and caring for our own parents, help us to treasure in our hearts the time we spend with them. Help us always to be kind.

All: God, bless all families, may they know the joy and love of Jesus' family.

(Short Pause)

ALTERNATE PRAYER FOR LENT CTD.

Reflection 2 - Raising Jairus' Daughter

Reader 3: When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about. At this they were overcome with amazement.

Reader 4: (Light Candle Two – optional instrumental music)

Jesus has profound compassion for this family with a sick child. We ask Jesus to bless families who experience the different hardships of life. May God help them and give them the strength to work through difficult times. Bless all families experiencing sickness and bereavement.

All: May God help all families experiencing difficulty and hopelessness.

(Short Pause)

Reflection 3 – The Wedding at Cana

Reader 5: There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine. And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine.

Reader 6: (Light candle three – optional instrumental music)

Lord, help us call to mind all the happy family times, family gatherings, baptisms, first communion celebrations, confirmations, weddings, birthdays. May God bless these times of joy and love.

All: May joy and love endure in our families.

ALTERNATE PRAYER SERVICE FOR LENT CTD.

(Short Pause)

Post Reflection Hymn: *Ubi Caritas* by Bob Hurd (from his album entitled *Ubi Caritas*)

Leader of Prayer: Together we pray;

Our Father.....

Closing Prayer

Let us pray, that the Holy Family will bless us always.
May we be supported in our need,
bless us as we celebrate,
guide us in our everyday school activities.

May the Holy Family strengthen all families throughout the world.
May it bring peace and joy.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Recessional Hymn/Song:

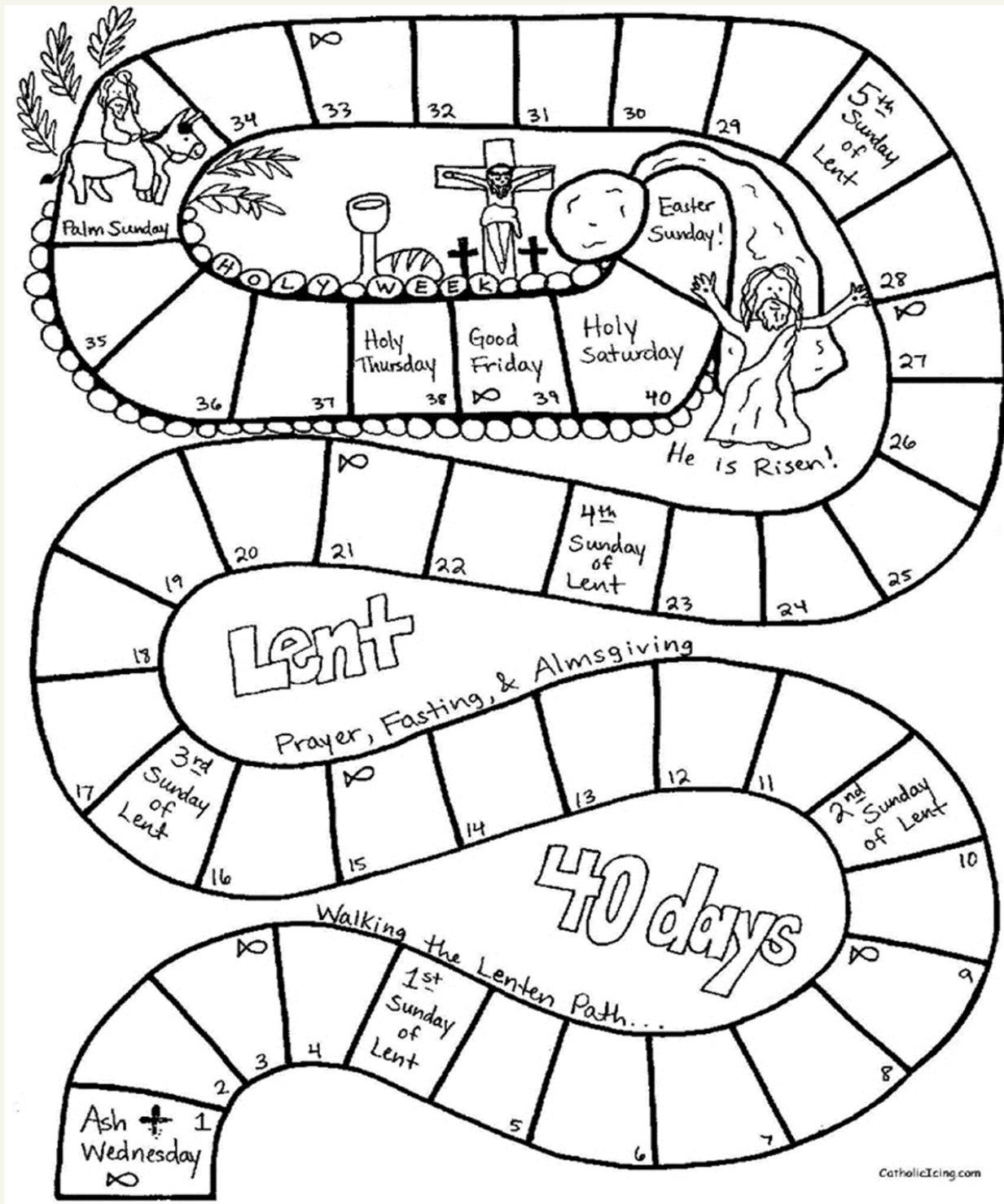
The Joy for all the Earth by Ephrem Feeley

See <http://www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/About/Hymn>



CLASS ACTIVITY 6

Write the Good deed you do each day in the box for that day then & bring it to Mass Easter Sunday and leave it in the Easter garden!!



CatholicIcing.com

R.E. TEACHER'S IN-SERVICE—FEB. 27th

The diocese will host our post-primary R.E. teachers' in-service on Thursday, February 27th in the Knock House Hotel, Knock, Co. Mayo. Please see details below. If any of your R.E. department wish to attend, please let me know by calling 086 3683778 or emailing postprimaryre@tuamarchdiocese.org

Topics:

- Renewal and Self care for R.E. Teachers and Chaplains
- Senior Cycle Planning and Resources (Non-Exam)
- Opportunities of Liturgy and Prayer with Youth People (Junior and Senior Cycle)

Speakers:

Fr Joey McGrath—Fr Joe McGrath, the creator, director and main presenter with Throwfire, is a priest of the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. He has been working with young people through schools, parishes, clubs, pilgrimages, psychotherapy, sport and drama for over 30 years. His theology, professional psychotherapy and drama qualifications are interwoven into interactive wellbeing days together with team Throwfire. They set out to inspire young people by “firing them up” to become fully alive through the Shekinah Christian way.

Nodlaig Lillis—Nodlaig Lillis is a native of the Cloyne Diocese and began working as Diocesan Youth & Young Adult Ministry Officer in the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore in September 2020. She is a qualified English and Religious Education teacher with 20 years' experience in the post-primary classroom. Nodlaig also has a Diploma in New Evangelization and Youth Ministry, as well as a Certificate in Studies in Catechism of the Catholic Church from Maryvale Institute. Her experience in Ministry also includes her time as Munster Regional Leader with Youth 2000, Teen Spirit: A Celebration of Teen Talent & Christian Faith, Campa Mhuire Mháthair Faith Camps for Children, Pope John Paul II Awards, as well as varied initiatives at parish level. For more on Ascend Youth & Young Adult Ministry go to www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry

Olivia Elliot—Olivia Elliott is a native of Tramore, Co. Waterford. She has been the Post- Primary Diocesan Advisor in Waterford and Lismore since May 2023 and is a recent member of the NAPPDA Executive. Olivia was a post-primary teacher, with 10 years experience, before taking time to stay home with her family. During that time, she was involved in running school retreats for children preparing for Confirmation. Regarding post - primary students; she assisted with Alpha Youth in schools and ran a youth group. Seminars, and various workshops. On February 27th she will look at ways to pray and prepare liturgy with young people.

WEB LINKS FOR LENT

Click on the link to direct you to relevant site:

[CLICK HERE](#) for Catholic Online providing helpful resources on Lent.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a YouTube link with cartoon on Lent

[CLICK HERE](#) for a YouTube link entitled Temptation of Jesus in Desert

[CLICK HERE](#) for facts about Lent

[CLICK HERE](#) for a site by Kenneth Collins on Lent

[CLICK HERE](#) for a link to the Catholic Resource Centre

[CLICK HERE](#) for a link to the American Catholic Bishops Conference

[CLICK HERE](#) for YouTube link to 'Lent in 2 minutes'!

[CLICK HERE](#) for a YouTube line to 'Lent, Season of Repentance, Fasting and Prayer.'

[CLICK HERE](#) for a link to the Dublin Diocesan Post-Primary Page on Lent



CLASSROOM AVTIVITY 7

The Temptation of Jesus

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Luke 4:1-2a (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Luke 4:1-13 (NIV).



H O L Y C T W J Q O F D C T D
 T Y C E L R Z N O F G V I L Y
 E E O M W S W E Q R V T I Y F
 M V M Y C T O S T M D V N M G
 P A M P V O R P F A E A E X P
 T B A B L N L I E D W L N I A
 E L N G H E D R X L A M H I U
 D C D D A M B I H S A S X G T
 L U I M N Z K T U U R L N E H
 F I A W G Z J R B O N U Q T O
 W P V B E F E U W Y X G R H R
 G C L E L J D C W H Z E R N I
 Q X I A S U T A H X S X G Y T
 P X M F O R T Y Y E E X U Q Y
 K I N G D O M S D S P E N Z Y

Spirit
 Holy
 desert
 tempted

devil
 live
 temple
 forty

days
 angels
 command
 kingdoms

Jordan
 authority
 bread
 Jerusalem

stone
 worship
 world
 hungry

LENTEN REFLECTION

Lent can be more than a time of fasting; it can be a season of feasting.

We can choose this Lent, to fast from certain things and to feast on others. It is a season in which we can:

Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of life
 Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light
 Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God
 Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify
 Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude
 Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism
 Fast from worry; feast on divine order
 Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation
 Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives
 Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer
 Fast from hostility; feast on non-resistance
 Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness
 Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others
 Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth
 Fast from discouragements; feast on hope
 Fast from facts that depress; feast on verities that uplift
 Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm
 Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire
 Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of sincerity
 Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence
 Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ dwelling in them

From a Benedictine source



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2025 CELEBRATED IN TUAM ARCHDIOCESE

Catholic Schools Week was celebrated from Sunday, January 19th until Saturday 25th, January. The theme for the week was: 'Alive in Christ.' The programme invites Catholic schools to reflect on and to celebrate the relationship that exists between home, school and parish. Bishop Francis visited St. Jarlath's College, Tuam on Thursday, Jan 23rd. There he presided at a service of prayer and music. Many thanks to Cliona Ferrick and the R.E. department at St Jarlath's College for hosting the celebration.



JOHN PAUL II AWARDS CELEBRATED IN CASTLEBAR

There was a celebration of the John Paul II Awards in Castlebar Parish on Thursday evening, January 23rd. Bishop Francis attended the event where three schools participated—St. Gerald's College, St. Josephs Secondary and Davitt College. Up to sixty young people participated and received the award on the night. Well done to Mary Connell and Fr Shane Costello for organising the event. Mr Tony Brennan, the National Coordinator for the event was also in attendance.



LENTEN MEDITATION

A Lenten Meditation

Theme: The Cross

INTRODUCTION:

(With soft background music and a candle lighting the students make themselves comfortable and restful in a circle around a cross with a purple cloth draped across the two arms. Paper and pens by their side)

.... Close your eyes. Be aware of the touch of clothing on your back, or the pressure of your back against the chair... now be aware of your hands resting on the chair... your sitting position... Now feel your feet touching your shoes.

Move to being aware of your breathing. Become aware of the air as it comes in and goes out through your nostrils... Do not concentrate on the air as it enters your lungs. Limit your awareness to the air as it passes through your nostrils. Do not control your breathing.

MEDITATION

People have different crosses to carry in life – physical, emotional, social We carry our crosses carefully, trying to make sure they don't take too much out of us. That Jesus could act out of love to the extent of dying on a cross is a mystery which is hard to imagine.

Come with me as in my imagination I draw my cross...

I think of the hardships I see in my own family... the ones I try not to see, the struggles that make life difficult for my friends.

I think of the journeys I find difficult to make... being kind to the people who hurt me, asking forgiveness from someone I have hurt, being truthful... are there others?

From all of this what does my cross look like... Is it harsh, dark, covered in thorns? Perhaps it is smooth and well-worn as I never leave it for too long without climbing onto it?

In your imagination *draw your cross*, the one made from the journey of your life.

ACTIVITY:

Lower the music and invite students in their own time to open their eyes and come back to the room.

The cloth is removed from one of the arms of the cross, symbolising our commitment to live as a loving person.

Invite students to take up their paper, pens and in silence draw their own cross, the one imagined in their meditation.

When each one has completed the task and placed their drawing around the cross, ask some to describe their drawing.

CONCLUSION:

We have a variety of crosses and we need one another and God's help to carry them.

Lent is a time when we are reminded of God's love for us especially when we are weighed down.

The purple cloth is fully removed from the cross as a symbol of the depth of God's love for us. The empty cross reveals that death and resurrection are also possible for us.

We ask you loving God, to strengthen our character so that we might grow in our relationships with each other. Help us to be sincere and tolerant in our attitudes to others.

Amen

St Blaise



We know more about the devotion to Saint Blaise by Christians around the world than we know about the saint himself. His feast is observed as a holy day in some Eastern Churches. In 1222, the Council of Oxford prohibited labor in England on Blaise's feast day. The Germans and Slavs hold him in special honor, and for decades many United States Catholics have sought the annual Saint Blaise blessing for their throats.

We know that Bishop Blaise was martyred in his city of Sebastea, Armenia, in 316. The legendary *Acts of St. Blaise* were written 400 years later. According to them, Blaise was a good bishop, working hard to encourage the spiritual and physical health of his people. Although the Edict of Toleration (311), granting freedom of worship in the Roman Empire, was already five years old, persecution still raged in Armenia. Blaise was apparently forced to flee to the back country. There he lived as a hermit in solitude and prayer, but he made friends with the wild animals. One day a group of hunters seeking wild animals for the amphitheater stumbled upon Blaise's cave. They were first surprised and then frightened. The bishop was kneeling in prayer surrounded by patiently waiting wolves, lions and bears.

The legend has it that as the hunters hauled Blaise off to prison, a mother came with her young son who had a fish bone lodged in his throat. At Blaise's command the child was able to cough up the bone.

Agricolaus, governor of Cappadocia, tried to persuade Blaise to sacrifice to pagan idols. The first time Blaise refused, he was beaten. The next time he was suspended from a tree and his flesh torn with iron combs or rakes. Finally, he was beheaded.

February Saints Crossword

February Saints and Feast Days Word Search

X	H	J	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	A	T	I	O	N	Q
W	R	N	N	Z	J	V	A	G	M	G	P	R	J	F	H
W	M	W	A	E	L	T	C	E	P	R	C	H	B	C	F
Y	Q	X	R	G	I	T	T	W	A	K	M	H	W	Y	P
T	K	O	L	H	A	H	X	C	U	Z	X	T	R	R	E
R	M	T	K	O	O	T	Y	W	L	K	X	G	N	I	T
E	K	A	R	D	U	L	H	B	M	N	M	P	Z	L	E
B	B	V	I	X	O	R	B	A	I	V	K	N	R	E	R
B	Q	U	Q	P	C	Y	D	R	K	T	Z	M	S	T	D
H	S	L	M	G	R	J	Y	E	I	R	G	I	D	M	A
Q	K	Y	G	X	L	J	R	N	S	K	A	M	G	F	M
D	A	N	S	G	A	R	K	T	Z	L	P	Y	Q	T	I
C	Z	C	L	M	J	W	R	Y	B	J	X	T	T	C	A
R	R	M	S	C	H	O	L	A	S	T	I	C	A	C	N

*Directions: Search only for the parts of the saints names or feast days that are in **bold print**.

St. **Blaise**

St. **Jerome** Emiliani

St. **Methodius**

St. **Ansgar**

St. Josephine **Bakhita**

St. **Peter** Damian

St. **Agatha**

St. **Scholastica**

St. **Polycarp**

St. **Paul Miki** and
Companions

Our Lady of **Lourdes**

Presentation of the Lord

St. **Cyril**

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ST PATRICK

The legend of Saint Patrick has evolved during the 1500-odd years since the missionary brought Christianity to Ireland. Much embellished in the telling, his story has become a mixture of truth, myth and allegory.

There's an overview of the saint's life on the [History of St Patrick page](#), but read on below for some of the myths about his mission in Ireland.

THE SHAMROCK

Perhaps the best-known legend of Saint Patrick involves the shamrock, the little plant that has gone on to become famous throughout the world as a symbol of Irish heritage.

After training as a priest and bishop, Patrick arrived in Ireland in 432AD and immediately set about trying to convert the pagan Celts who inhabited the island.

Having previously lived and worked there, he was very probably already aware that the number three held special significance in Celtic tradition (and, indeed, in many pagan beliefs), and he applied this knowledge in a clever way.

He used the shamrock, a three-leaved clover which grows all over the island, to explain the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity ie the theory that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are each separate elements of just one entity.



SAINT PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE

Attributed to St Patrick, the poem known as *The Deer's Cry* or *St Patrick's Breastplate* tells the story told of how the saint used a power called féth fíada to transform himself and his companion into wild deer so that they could escape ambush while on their way to preach at the Hill of Tara.

This royal hill in the Boyne Valley was the ancient capital of Ireland and, to the Druids, the sacred dwelling place of their gods.

Awaiting their arrival, and with every intention of attacking or imprisoning the two Christians, their Celtic adversaries saw only a deer with a fawn roaming across the fields. As a result of this power, the missionaries successfully reached the Hill without incident.

ST PATRICK

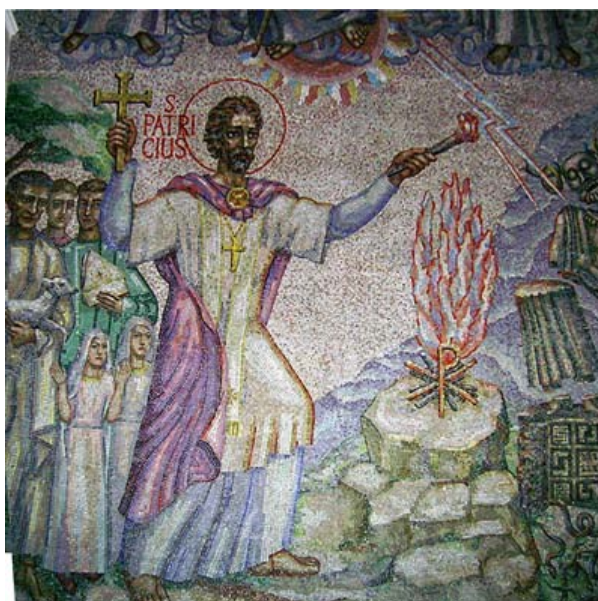
THE MAGIC FIRE

The Celtic feast of Beltaine (Feast of the Fires) was a major festival to celebrate the beginning of summer and triumph over the dark powers. Traditionally, a fire would be lit by Ireland's High King on the top of the Hill of Tara, and his fire would then be used to light all other fires.

So, when St Patrick lit a fire in advance of High King Laoghaire, he was deliberately inviting attention from the pagan chiefs.

The druid elders were sent by Laoghaire to investigate and they reported back that Patrick's fire had magical powers because they could not put it out. They warned that if the King did not extinguish Patrick's fire, it would burn forever.

King Laoghaire was unable to extinguish the saint's fire and accepted that Patrick's 'magic' was stronger than his. Although he did not choose to convert to Christianity himself, the King endorsed Patrick's mission to convert the Irish.



Class Questions

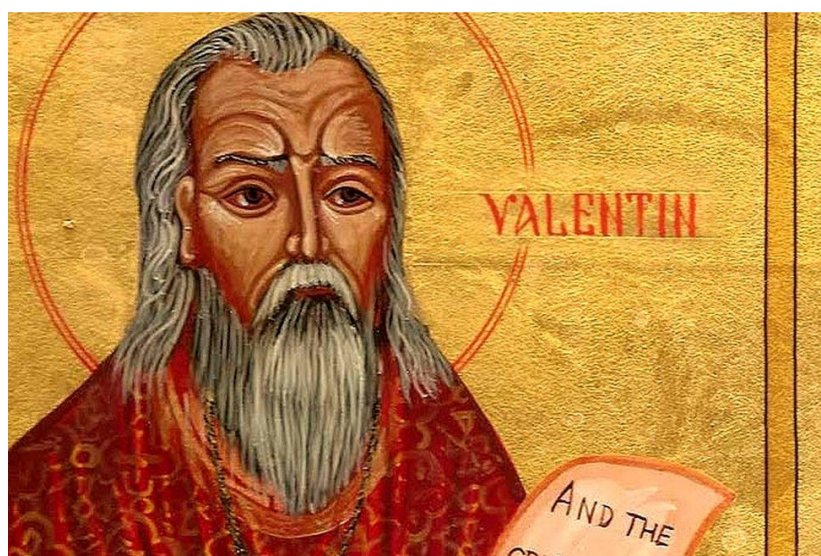
- 1) **When did Patrick arrive in Ireland?**
- 2) **Why was the Boyne Valley significant?**
- 3) **What was Beltaine?**
- 4) **What did Patrick set about doing when he came to Ireland?**
- 5) **What was féth fiada?**
- 6) **What day is St. Patrick's day celebrated on this year?**

St Valentine—Friday, February 14th

By some accounts, St. Valentine was a Roman priest and physician who was martyred during the persecution of Christians by the emperor Claudius II Gothicus about 270. He was buried on the Via Flaminia, and Pope Julius I reportedly built a basilica over his grave. Other narratives identify him as the bishop of Terni, Italy, who was martyred, apparently also in Rome, and whose relics were later taken to Terni. It is possible these are different versions of the same original account and refer to only one person. Numerous churches around the world claim to be in possession of his relics. These include his skull on display in a glass reliquary at the Basilica di Santa Maria in Cosmedin in Rome, a shoulder blade housed at the Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul in Prague (after having been discovered in the church's basement in 2002), a vessel tinged with his blood in addition to sundry other artifacts at the Whitefriar Street Church in Dublin, and relics kept inside a wax effigy of the saint situated in front of the altar of Old St. Ferdinand Shrine in Florissant, Missouri.

According to legend, St. Valentine signed a letter “from your Valentine” to his jailer’s daughter, whom he had befriended and healed from blindness. Another common legend states that he defied the emperor’s orders and secretly married couples to spare the husbands from being conscripted to serve in war.

Valentine’s Day as a lovers’ festival dates at least from the 14th century.



St Valentine—Friday, February 14th

Name: _____ Date: _____

Saint Valentine

R F Z Z H N W O S B Z W E P J E C N A M O R A Q
 K H G Q L H T G D V O W M K J W D H V G P U T P
 S Q X O Z T L F N I Z A L C G G S B M G A K I B
 P N V Q A F J P W F R X C L B H W T H S Y L Q O
 Z H O Q E L N E Y R D M F C O H Z Y S H Z A L C
 E S X F D S K X I G E Y Q K V V T J I C I E I Z
 S P O U O J W A B N F E W K N I E I D H J H U P
 X A I T Q U G J Z U N X M D N M M H T X M K D G
 A E S Q Q E R H R O M A N A E A O L K S S V M P
 D W K R Z H F T T X M J I R P R Z W S F A H U S
 A T H A X Y T X E Q Y T P M Z T R U I U I D N F
 Y V A L E N T I N E S L J A U Y J C H D N A I K
 V C C A I A N E Y I N B A Y Q R L F O Q T S V Z
 O S X F J X O S R F Y T F S P A H E I V G B Z T
 E Z V U K Q I H V X S X H H U O O B W W H E B V
 U M C I W G C W D G Y D Z D C H O R H L D K K Q
 H P N C V O I L F Q E W I O K Y Q U P H B M G C
 B D K E G X J V N S V U M H P I Y A L V Q A O V
 W H T M X G V G F D S E E Y X U R R G G Z M K X
 Z S X S J T G G A R O A S Y L C U Y K R O S E S
 B N A Z E K W E W F R Q G M B N C T S D Q A Z V
 U U I H F I W I K T W K P O X V F J C K N W L U
 Q L Y T S E R S S E R O O N U Z C Q U E T V X U
 Q Q U O O P V P O X B P R S X C O R S X I N A R

christianity

claudius

romance

hearts

saint

fourteenth

marriage

martyr

roman

heal

valentine

february

priest

roses

love

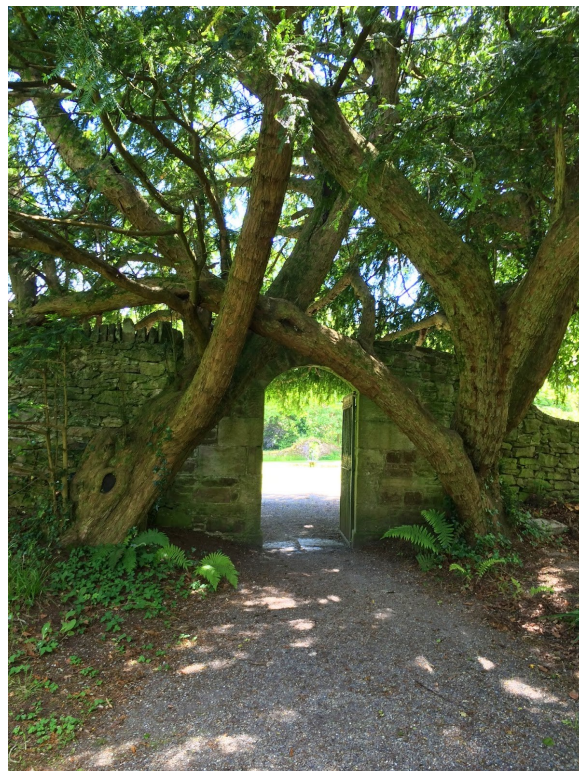
SACRED SPACE FOR LENT

The Lenten Garden

The idea of the Lenten Garden is that it would be prepared as a sacred space at the beginning of Lent and once a week over the intercom at morning prayer at different aspect of the garden can be reflected on and a challenge set to the students of one thing they could do in that week to better themselves or their lives.

This lent we have prepared a Lenten garden.

As we walk along the journey of Lent and we prepare for Easter we will use our Lenten Garden to help us reflect and make positive changes.



Week 1. **Rubbish.** In our garden this week we look at the rubbish. Before we begin any garden we first need to tidy it up. Maybe during this week we could reflect on what we could tidy up in our own lives? Have we let our lives or homes get messy? Do we need to get organised at home or in our study? Is there one thing we could do this week that would tidy up our lives for Lent?

Week 2. **Weeds:** In our garden this week we look at the weeds. Are there some things in our lives which are out of place, things that we wish weren't there. Are there thoughts or habits that we need to get rid of. Maybe Gossip, putting ourselves down or resenting others? This lent perhaps we could decide on at least one thing we need to stop one thing we could get rid of out of our lives?

Week 3. **Poor Soil:** In our garden this week we look at the stony, poor soil. Plants need good soil in which to grow. Are we taking care of our physical and mental health? Could we give up sugar, take up exercise, catch up with friends? Is there one thing we could do this week that might improve our lives in some small way?

Week 4. **Seeds:** In our garden this week we look at the seeds. Now that we have prepared the soil perhaps we could plant a seed by adding gratitude to our lives. As we are thankful for the good in our lives we become less self-obsessed and we allow more good to follow. Write 5 things every day this week you are truly grateful for.

Week 5. **First signs of Life:** In our garden this week we look at the budding plants. Once we start to improve our lives we need to encourage ourselves and show ourselves compassion. As we begin our journey towards God's Love we need to show kindness to ourselves and others. Could we decide on Acts of Kindness we could do for ourselves or others this week?

This week takes place in holy week so maybe it could form part of a reflection before they leave to encourage them to participate in the Easter Ceremonies?



LITURGICAL NOTES FOR SCHOOL

Present the students with a variety of spiritual practices throughout Lent

- ◆Liturgy of the Hours—Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer
- ◆Reading Scripture in Class
- ◆Stations of the Cross
- ◆Pilgrimage
- ◆Quiet Time
- ◆Reflection and Prayer for those preparing for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation
- ◆Lenten Meditation

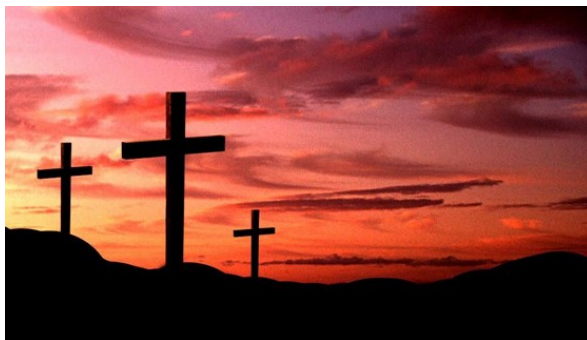
Introduce the Possibility of Variety during your Lenten Observance

- ◆Lent is not a season of willpower, nor is it a test to see how strong you are. Lent is a season where the Holy Spirit searches our hearts and uncovers our wounds and weaknesses, bringing healing and strength.
- ◆Each week, new ideas based on the readings of the Sunday could be suggested.
- ◆A Lenten practice can be for Forty Days, for a week or even a single day.

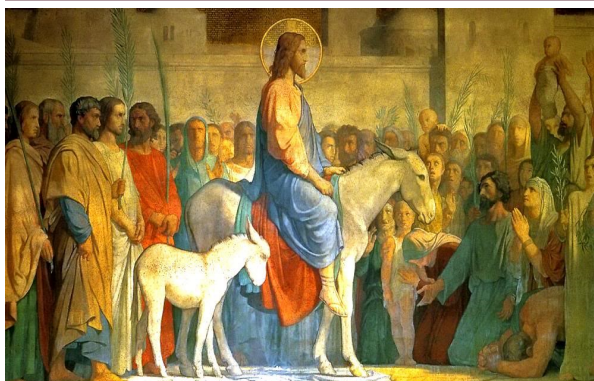
Prepare Students for Easter

In recent years schools close the week before Holy Week. This leaves little or no time for preparing students for Easter and the Easter Ceremonies.

- ◆It might be a good idea to prepare the students for Easter during Lent. Lent is after all, a time of preparation for Easter.
- ◆Easter is the most important time of the Liturgical year. It is, in fact, the highpoint of the Church's year.
- ◆The season of Lent could be a time to introduce students to the varying liturgical rites experienced throughout the period of the Triduum.
- ◆Introduce the students to the concept of the Triduum
- ◆Contact the Parish Priest and investigate ways to involve the students in the Easter celebrations.



PREPARING STUDENTS FOR EASTER



THE EASTER TRIDUUM



- 1) Procession of Gifts on Holy Thursday
- 2) Prayers of Intercession on Good Friday
- 3) Music Ministry
- 4) Help with the bonfire on Holy Saturday
- 5) Ministers of the Word
- 6) Help prepare and make an Easter Garden
- 7) Liturgical Arts for Easter—making banners for the Church.

Source for above: Columba McCann, *101 Liturgical Suggestions*, (Dublin: Veritas, 2014).

PALM SUNDAY

The beginning of Lent is a good time to start thinking about Holy Week and how its liturgy could be improved.

Palm Sunday is the last Sunday of Lent. The blessing of palms and procession are often rather minimalistic in our Irish churches. It would be good, for example, to use real branches for at least some of the participants.

Your school could re-enact this ritual with first or second year classes. It could be built into a pilgrimage procession around the school and end at a sacred space in or near the school grounds. Use some of the readings from Palm Sunday or excerpts from the long Gospel use this day.



USE WATER DURING THE EASTER SEASON

A message which is coming through with increasing clarity from parishes around Ireland is that our liturgies are weighed down with words, and at the same time symbolically impoverished. Actions can speak louder than words. Use symbols with water—maybe design a water symbol at your school and design prayer services around it for the Easter Season. We must also remember to celebrate Easter for the fifty days until Pentecost. Easter does not end when the holidays end..!



Liturgical Calendar for February/March

Sun. Feb. 2nd:	Presentation of the Lord
Mon. Feb. 3rd	St. Blaise
Tues. Feb 11th	World Day of the Sick
Fri. Feb 14th	St Valentine
Thurs. Feb 20th	World Day of Social Justice
Tues. Mar. 4th	Shrove Tuesday
Wed. Mar. 5th	Ash Wednesday
Sun. Mar. 9th	First Sunday of Lent
Sun. Mar. 16th	Second Sunday of Lent
Mon. Mar. 17th	St Patrick
Tues. Mar. 18th	St Cyril of Jerusalem
Sun. Mar 23rd	Third Sunday of Lent
Tues. Mar. 25th	Annunciation of the Lord
Sun. Mar 30th	Fourth Sunday of Lent and Mothers' Day
Sun. Apr. 6th	Fifth Sunday of Lent
Sun. Apr. 13th	Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
Thurs. Apr. 17th	Holy Thursday
Fri. Apr. 18th	Good Friday
Sat. Apr. 19th	Holy Saturday
Sun. Apr. 20th	Easter Sunday

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