

Ash Wednesday is the doorway into our Lenten season of renewal – a day rich in associations and symbolism.

It marks the beginning of Lent – a time for turning again to the practice of our faith, in prayer, self-denial (fasting) and practical generosity (almsgiving).

Although it is not a Holy Day of Obligation, many Catholics consider it important to receive ashes on this day. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of a period of 40 days (Sundays excluded) in which Catholics prepare for Eastertide. This period also represents the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert as well as the 40 years that the Israelites spent in exile.

The ashes themselves come from the burned palms from last year's Palm Sunday celebration: thus bringing us full circle to our last celebration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

On Ash Wednesday, we are reminded that we are called to turn away from sin, to repent and to believe the Good News of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

Receiving Ashes

An outward sign of an inner step

“As we cross this threshold we customarily receive ashes on our foreheads, in the sign of the cross. This is a public mark of our turning again to God, seeking his mercy, forgiveness and help.

“We use these words: ‘Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return’. Yes, we cannot pretend otherwise. Or: ‘Repent, and believe in the Gospel’. Yes, we seek the one thing that is absolutely necessary: the grace of God.”

the freezing temperatures. CAFOD is also in touch with its sister agency, Caritas Turkey, who work in the region. They are currently assessing needs and delivering essential humanitarian aid.

You can find out more about CAFOD's Syria Turkey Emergency Appeal or make a donation

<https://cafod.org.uk/>

Holy Family WhatsApp Prayer Group

A virtual prayer group is a flexible and scalable prayer group that can easily engage parishioners to pray together for specific topics or issues.

Matthew 18:20 that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is there in the midst of them. Although a virtual prayer group does not bring people together physically, they are as one in spirit as they journey towards God.

If you would like to join the Holy Family WhatsApp Prayer Group please contact the Parish Office who can verify that you are on the database and then pass your number on to Sue Haworth-Edwards who is setting up the prayer group.

Recessional Hymn: Alleluia song of gladness

Alleluia, song of gladness,
Voice of joy that cannot die;
Alleluia is the anthem
Ever dear to choirs on high;
In the house of God abiding
Thus they sing eternally.

Alleluia thou resoundest,
True Jerusalem and free;
Alleluia, joyful mother,
All thy children sing with thee;
But by Babylon's sad waters
Mourning exiles now are we.

Alleluia we deserve not
Here to chant forevermore;
Alleluia our transgressions
Make us for a while give o'er;
For the holy time is coming
Bidding us our sins deplore.

Therefore in our hymns we pray Thee,
Grant us, blessed Trinity,
At the last to keep Thine Easter
In our home beyond the sky;
There to Thee forever singing
Alleluia joyfully.

The Parish Office is currently normally open on Wednesday and Friday Mornings. Please use the normal telephone number (01252 321 422) and parish email address: holyofficesurrey@gmail.com

**Who is Jesus and why should you be a catholic?
Come and See!**

In the new year we will begin another cycle of adult exploration of the faith using the sycamore course. This is the route for Adult Baptism, Adult Confirmation, and reception into the Catholic Church if you are already a baptised Christian.

However the first sessions are a simple invitation to come and see and find out a bit more. If you are curious about the faith, about why we believe in Jesus, or know someone who might like to explore these questions please express your interest!

Forms are now available and the course will begin in March The Catholic Truth Society has a lovely set of reflections on the sacrament of reconciliation (which we are encouraged to make use of in Lent) encouraging us to reflect on why we need this beautiful sacrament.

<https://www.ctsbooks.org/why-do-i-need-to-go-to-confession/>

CAFOD is part of the Disasters Emergency Committee and is one of the UK's 15 leading aid charities to raise funds quickly and efficiently in times of crisis overseas. The charity have launched a Syria Turkey Emergency Appeal in response to the Earthquakes that hit the region last week. To date 35,000 people are known to have died, with 17 million people directly affected by the tragedy.

Donations to CAFOD's Syria Turkey Appeal will be used to provide shelter, food, water and emergency medical assistance as well as winter kits to help people cope with