

COR Newsletter – 06 February 2008

Dear all,

Last Sunday

Thank you to everyone who provided produce to sell in our produce sale. This was the last week of the Epiphany season - the season of revelation of the identity and nature of Jesus. We now enter the season of Lent.

Which starts today!

Tonight - Ash Wednesday - we have a simple **said service in church starting at 7pm.** that marks the start of the season of Lent.

Next Sunday

The first Sunday of Lent. Holy Communion at 10am as usual. The new Lent communion books are ready. Sunday school as normal.

Monday night Lent course

Is progressing through the last week of Jesus' life. We have now covered Palm Sunday and Monday - the procession into Jerusalem and the turning over the tables in the temple. This course has self- contained notes with each one so if you couldn't join at the beginning - don't worry - just come along at **7pm on a Monday evening** using the side door at the church.

Britannia Ball

I now have the tickets. I know that some people are busy getting/arranging tables. Well done everyone. Next Sunday is the last Sunday before the ball so please get names (to give to the hotel for place settings) and money to me as soon as possible. Thank you.

Thought for the day

Lent, as a forty day period of preparation for Easter day was firmly established by the end of the fourth century. In earlier Christianity the preparation period commonly only covered one or two days or even less. Lent very quickly became associated with people who were in a period of preparation for baptism into the faith at dawn on Easter Sunday and who then were introduced to the sacrament of Communion on that same Easter Morning.

Note: In early Christianity there were "baptisteries" housing baptismal pools and people were originally separated into men and women, stripped and baptised by full immersion and then robed symbolically in a white baptismal robe and led in darkness into a church to celebrate the Eucharist for the first time. This must have made quite an impact!

Eventually those who were already baptised considered it important to join with those preparing for baptism, and so the season of Lent that we recognise today started to take shape. The Lenten journey is supposed to be a process of spiritual growth - a journey from one point of view to another - from one interpretation of life to another - from a self centred to a more God-centred life. In the long experience of the church - called *the tradition* - this journey can best be facilitated by certain rituals and processes that raise our awareness such as fasting and prayer. The first of these rituals - Ash Wednesday - reminds us of our own mortality, our smallness and dependence

on God and propels us on our journey in the proper frame of mind. Humility in the face of an awesome God - not grovelling, but with a proper sense of who we really are including our propensity to fall short of God's high standards set for us (especially in the example set for us by Jesus) and a willingness and openness to change for the better.

Prayer for today

This is taken from a book I am using to take me through Lent that uses the writings of "Seasons of Celebration" by the Roman Catholic mystic Thomas Merton and is called "Lent and Easter wisdom from Thomas Merton" put together by the Merton Institute for contemplative living. This is the prayer set for tomorrow, but I think it encapsulates very well what Lent is about.

*My God, you have created me not to die for you but to live for you.
You would not wish me blind to my destiny but to accept my life
with eyes open to the possibilities of loving you and those intimates
with whom I share my life.*

Open my eyes to my true destiny:

*to know you through the Son whom you have sent to teach me
what I must do to be fully human.*

I must love you with my whole heart and love my neighbours as I love myself.

Amen.

Love and peace

Martin