

Lenten Journey 2025

St John Vianney & St Thomas Becket

THE SEASON OF LENT



From the earliest days, Easter - The feast of the Resurrection was celebrated as the climax of the Church's calendar and it was set aside as the day when new converts were received into the family of believers. But adult baptism didn't happen overnight. After several years of training, the candidate entered into an intense period of preparation. A time of **Prayer** (learning secret prayers i.e. Creed, Our Father), **Fasting** and **Charity** - all aimed at preparing the candidate for baptism at the Easter Vigil. It lasted for six weeks (36 days, Sunday's weren't included). As the Church grew, Lent took on a new aspect - rather than preparing people for baptism, it was seen as a time of renewal, preparing to renew one's baptismal promises at the celebration of the resurrection. It took on a penitential aspect. It was increased to 40 days in length, to reflect Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, hence Lent begins midweek on Wednesday and the custom grew that everyone was marked with ashes, a sign of repentance. Although the emphasis had shifted, it remained, & still remains, a time of Prayer, Fasting & Charity. Do you see how closely Lent & Easter are linked? True to say, that the way we spend the next 40 days will determine how we celebrate the Easter festival. Lent shouldn't be a sad time, a time of trial, to punish & test ourselves, but through Prayer, Fasting & Charity it should be a season which enriches, nourishes and liberates us; a time when we actively grow in our relationship with God and with our brothers & sisters.

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS TIMES

9.15am ~ Mass in St Wilfrid's School

10.00am ~ Our Lady's

11.00am ~ St Thomas Becket

11.15am ~ St Bede's

12.00pm ~ St Wilfrid's

2.30pm ~ Mass in St Bede's School

7.00pm ~ St Wilfrid's

PRAYER

“There is nothing more worthwhile than to converse with God, for prayer unites us with God as his companions... Our soul should be directed in God, not merely when we suddenly think of prayer, but even when we are concerned with something else... Prayer is the light of the soul, giving true knowledge of God... Prayer is a precious way of communicating with God, it gladdens the soul... It is more than words. It is a desire for God... the gift of God’s grace... Once we have tasted this food, we are set alight by an eternal desire for the Lord, the fiercest of fires lighting up our soul.”

St. John Chrysostom

CHURCHES OPEN FOR PRAYER ~ Both St Bede's and St Wilfrid's are open each day for private prayer from 8.00am until 5.00pm. Call in for a quiet few minutes with the Lord.

~ **READ POPE FRANCIS' LENTEN MESSAGE** ~

Go to: www.vaticannews.va

The HALLOW Website ~ for daily prayer texts: ~ Go to: <https://hallow.com/lent/>

DOWNLOAD ~ The Cafod Lent Calendar – www.cafod.org.uk/pray

LENTEN HOUSE MASSES ~ Please speak to Fr. Paul if you would like Mass to be celebrated in your own homes this Lent / Easter with family, friends, neighbours. Contact the Parish Office.

~ **PRAYING BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT** ~

Engaging in prayers before the Blessed Sacrament, which is more than a mere symbol of Christ’s sacrifice; it is the actual body and blood of Christ, shed for our eternal salvation, connects us with Christ’s divine mystery. By dedicating time to these prayers, we deepen our spiritual journey and solidify our relationship with Jesus. We can have these moments of adoration in silence or with others. They enrich our faith and remind us of Christ’s eternal love and sacrifice.

Our churches are open daily for private prayer, so do pop in; but below are specific times when the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for adoration. Not sure how to pray? Pick up a Prayer sheet as you enter into church. These sheets will help you reflect on the Eucharist’s meaning and lead you to reverence and gratitude for Christ’s sacrifice and abiding presence. www.laycistercians.com

Sundays 4.00pm – 5.00pm ~ St Wilfrid's
Mondays 8.30am – 9.30am ~ St Wilfrid's
Tuesdays 6.00pm – 7.00pm ~ St Bede's
Thursdays 6.30pm – 7.30pm ~ St Wilfrid's
Fridays 11.00am – 12.00pm ~ St Bede's
Saturdays 11.00am – 11.50am ~ St Wilfrid's

EXTRA MASSES ~ Please note the early Mass on the Fridays of Lent and the extra evening Mass on Thursdays, both at St Wilfrid's.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS ~ Will be prayed at St Wilfrid's on Sunday afternoons 4.00pm & Tuesday mornings at 10.00am; at Our Lady's on Wednesdays 11.15am; and at St Bede's on Fridays at 7.00pm.

SCRIPTURE GROUP ~ Reflecting on the Sunday's Readings. Join us each Wednesday at Our Lady's after Midday Mass.

CHURCHES TOGETHER ~ Lenten Bible Studies ~ For further details contact:
Deacon Shirley Hassall: s.d.hassall@outlook.com

~ LENTEN TALKS ~

13th March – Fr Michael Moreton: *Mysticism & Modernity*

St Winefrid's, Sandbach 7.00pm

20th March – Fr Paul Shaw: *The spirituality of Charles Dickens*

St Anne's, Nantwich 7.00pm

27th March – Fr Nick Kern: *Christianity & Buddhism*

St Gabriel's, Alsager 7.00pm

3rd April – Fr David McLoughlin: *The Spirituality of Eastern Christianity*

St Mary's, Crewe 7.00pm

RECONCILIATION

“The special feature of Easter is that it is the occasion when the whole Church rejoices over the forgiveness of sin... All of us must strive hard and so on Easter day no one should remain bound by the vices of his former nature.”

St Leo the Great



As well as the regular Saturday Confessions at St Wilfrid's 11.00 – 11.50am; there will also be two Parish Reconciliation Services during Lent. These will be celebrated on the following dates:

Friday 11 April 7.00pm ~ St Bede's

Monday 14 April 7.00pm ~ St Wilfrid's

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also available on request.

PRAY ~ One decade of the Rosary each day, or more if you are able, praying for Peace in our World.

FASTING

“These 40 days should be given over to fasting which means, not simply a reduction in our food, but the elimination of our evil habits.”

St Leo the Great

“Fasting in Lent is intended to direct our minds, hearts, bodies back to a deeper love for Jesus Christ crucified... The practice of bodily mortification is a way to remember, a chance to acknowledge by penitence our own contribution to Christ's suffering. Nonetheless fasting has a more important reason... We all have the experience at times of drifting away from God, of allowing worldly concerns to replace an essential need for God. Fasting from food, from indulgent behaviours, from unnecessary enjoyments, is a way to make room for God to occupy again the centre of our lives”

Fr. Donald Haggerty

A FRUGAL LUNCH ~ (Soup & Bread) Will be held in St Wilfrid's Hall each Saturday throughout Lent after the Midday Mass. Proceeds to Cafod, Mary's Meals & Aid to the Church in Need. All Welcome.

Why not try 'fasting' from your radios, TV'S, iPhones, computers. Spend a little time each day without them, and give that time to family, friends, the Lord, or read an up-lifting book.

CHARITY

“What you do yourself, will be done to you; what you give, will be given to you; as you judge, so you will be judged; as you show kindness, so it will be shown to you. Your portion will be weighed out for you in your own scales.”

St Clement 1



'BIG LENT WALK' ~ This year, Cafod is again encouraging us to walk 200 kilometres during the 40 days of Lent (5 km per day) to help fight global poverty. Sister Phyllis & Fr Paul and several parishioners are taking up the challenge. If you can sponsor them, your support would be greatly appreciated. (Simply, place your donation in an envelope marked 'Cafod' and hand into church).

As part of this venture, we invite you to join us on Saturday 5th April (departing 9.15am) for a joint **Sponsored Walk** between our three churches (approx 10 miles).

Please contact the Parish Office for further details.

CAFOD ENVELOPES ~ Are available at the back of our churches. These can be returned anytime throughout Lent. With these envelopes it is easy to *Gift Aid* any donations that you make, thus increasing your gift to the needy of the world.

VISIT THE SICK & ELDERLY ~ The greatest thing we can give to one another is our time. Make an effort this Lent to visit, especially the sick and housebound. If you, or someone in your family is unable to come to church and would like a visit from the clergy/ministers, please contact the Parish Office..

CHESHIRE FOODBANK ~ Donations of tins, dry foods, soap etc., can be left at the back of church. These will be forwarded to the Cheshire Foodbank for local distribution.

CHURCH CLEANING/GARDENING ~ Thanks to all who already volunteer to help clean our churches and help look after our gardens. If you can spare 30 minutes or so, each week / month to help them, please contact the Parish Office.

LENTEN WEEKLY PROGRAMME

SUNDAY

5.30pm ~ vigil Mass (*Our Lady's*)

6.00pm ~ vigil Mass (*St Bede's*)

9.15am ~ Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

11.00am ~ Mass (*St Thomas Becket*)

11.15am ~ Mass (*St Bede's*)

4.00pm – 5.00pm ~ Exposition / Stations of the Cross (*St Wilfrid's*)

5.30pm ~ Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

MONDAY

8.30am - 9.30am ~ Exposition followed by **9.30am** Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

TUESDAY

9.10am ~ Morning Prayer followed by **9.30am** Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

10.00am ~ Stations of the Cross (*St Wilfrid's*)

6.00 – 7.00pm ~ Exposition followed by **7.00pm** Mass (*St Bede's*)

WEDNESDAY

11.15am ~ Stations of the Cross (*Our Lady's*)

12.00pm Mass (*Our Lady's*)

12.45 – 1.45pm Scripture Study (*Our Lady's*)

THURSDAY

9.10am ~ Morning Prayer followed by **9.30am** Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

12.00pm ~ Midday Mass (*St Bede's*)

6.30 – 7.30pm ~ Exposition followed by **7.30pm** Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

FRIDAY

6.30am ~ Early Morning Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

9.10am ~ Morning Prayer followed by **9.30am** Mass (*St Wilfrid's*)

11.00am – 12.00pm ~ Exposition followed by **Midday** Mass (*St Bede's*)

7.00pm ~ Stations of the Cross (*St. Bede's*)

SATURDAY

11.00 – 11.50am ~ Exposition with the opportunity of Reconciliation (*St Wilfrid's*)

12.00pm ~ Midday Mass (*St. Wilfrid's*)

12.30pm ~ Frugal Lunch (*St. Wilfrid's Hall*)

5.30pm ~ Vigil Mass (*Our Lady's*)

6.00pm ~ Vigil Mass (*St Bede's*)

Heavenly Father, As we begin the discipline of Lent, protect us in our struggle against evil. Make this season holy by our self-denial, that we may be cleansed from sin, renewed in spirit, ready to celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour.

Amen.