

Lent 2018—Journeying Together



Lent 2018 begins early—with Easter Sunday falling on 1 April.

Our theme this year is “Journeying Together”. It had its inspiration in Pope Francis’ address to Bishops in Brazil during World Youth Day there. Reflecting on why people are leaving the Church he said, ‘*We need a church capable of walking at people’s side ... a church which accompanies them on their journey.*’

We picked the theme up again during our day with Bill Huebsch last autumn.

It highlights the fact that we need to communicate God’s message of love, forgiveness and mercy in ways that people can understand. But, quite often, we need to be reminded of that message ourselves—which is where Lent comes in. It is a penitential season—when we reflect on our human weakness—and it is a solemn one. There is, though, a deeper joy in there. When Jesus came back from being tempted in the desert, he did not go round berating people for being miserable sinners and worms! He acknowledged again and again the sin of the world and the way people turned away from—or distorted—the ways that lead to God. But, it is perhaps in the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday this Lent that we hear Jesus’ “mission statement” - he was sent into the world not to condemn it but to save it. His task—as the Son of God—was to set aside his divinity to live as all people do. He came to walk at people’s sides—he accompanied them on their journey. And he continues to do so through his Word, the sacraments and through other people.

The hope for the Lent sessions is that we remind ourselves of aspects of Jesus’ earthly life and reflect on what they mean for us today. It is possible to use the material on your own, but there is something special if

you can share it with other people—even just two or three (remember Jesus’ promise—‘where two or three are gathered I am there with them’). This serves several purposes—not least helping you to keep going when by Week 3 your resolve is weakening! It also follows the model Jesus used—of being with his friends over a meal or on a walk and chatting with them—listening to them—and helping them to understand a bit more clearly where God was working through the events of their daily lives. It gives us practice in walking at people’s sides so that, when the opportunities arise, we can walk at the sides of people who are looking for the things that give meaning to their lives.

As Pope Francis said in the same speech, ‘For ordinary people the mystery enters through the heart.’ This Lent gives us a chance to open our hearts to the mystery of God’s love—and to prepare ourselves to share that love with others who long to know that they matter—and that God loves them too. 

Lent Resources

Our own Lent resources include materials for weekly get-togethers looking at the Sunday gospels. There are also prayer stations that can be used in churches or schools or in a prayer space at home. You can also subscribe to a daily email reflection which pops into your inbox the evening before. If you know someone who would appreciate this but who does not use email, think about printing off the week’s booklet for them. The Lent resources are available online—and on CD on request. If you need a hard copy of the materials please contact Karen or Nancy in the office and they will arrange to send them to you. (A donation to cover printing and postage is always welcome!)

For people who would like to do that bit more, the British Jesuits have created an online retreat for Lent 2018 starting on 14 February (Ash Wednesday). Take a look at www.pathwaystogod.org

Contact Details

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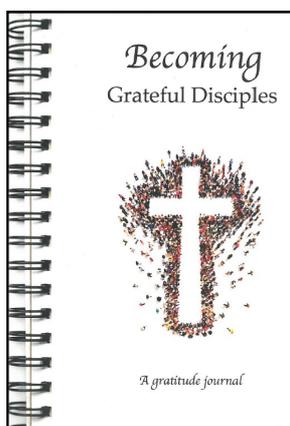


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Becoming Grateful Disciples



When a friend of mine asked if I would contribute some reflections to a book she and another friend were thinking about, I was happy to say yes. What I had not anticipated was that she envisaged our holiday as a good time to do it! It got still curiously when we arrived at her home close to the airport and she had arranged a Skype call with a lady called Leisa Anslinger—the friend—who would edit and produce the book in the United States—so we had “met”.

Despite its slightly bizarre beginnings, the process worked really well. The three of us would decide each morning which of the themes we would focus on that day—go off and do lovely things together—and then settle to writing up the reflections in the evenings. It certainly added a beautiful dimension to what was already a special time away. Each day, Teresa would email our latest contributions over to Leisa who became increasingly enthusiastic as the week progressed. She also added a fourth writer, Matt Reichart, to offer some complementary insights.

The book was produced and duly launched at the International Catholic Stewardship Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia last September and was well-received. It is now available on amazon.co.uk as a paperback or on Kindle. (Royalties go to the diocese!)

It was great to receive my copy at Christmas—though had to smile when I saw the image on the front—and remembered something very similar from our own *Forward Together in Hope* resources! 

Kathryn Turner

Diocesan Festival 2018

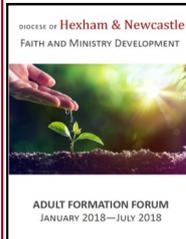


Photograph: Diocesan Festival 2017

The Diocesan Festival will be held at Emmaus Village on **Saturday 23 June – Sunday 24 June 2018**
More information and booking forms will be available shortly—but please get the date into your diary!

Faith and Ministry Development

A new booklet sets out the wide range of faith development opportunities on offer across our diocese from January to July this year.



Copies have been distributed widely, and are available from the Formation and Evangelisation page of the diocesan website, or by request from Department for Adult Formation and Evangelisation, telephone 0191 243 3316, or email adult.formation@diocesehn.org.uk 

Upcoming Events in the Diocese and Local Centres

St Antony's Priory

Saturday 10th February: 10 - 12.30pm
Together in Meditation. Two separate hours of meditation rooted in the Christian tradition at 10am and 11.30am.

Tuesday 13th February: 1.30pm-3.30 pm
Praying with your Bus Pass

3 sessions Exploring prayer and spirituality for the second half of life with Bishop Mark Bryant. Beginning with prayer at 12.30pm then lunch (optional). Use public transport and get a reduction on the price of the day (then February 27th and March 13th same format). Suggested donation £12 with lunch, £6 without.

Saturday 24th February: 10 - 12.30pm
Together in Meditation. Two separate hours of meditation rooted in the Christian tradition at 10am and 11.30am

For further information or to book please contact Paul Golightly
0191 384 3747 | info@stantonypriory.co.uk

Minsteracres

Walking Retreat
21 February 2018, 10.00am - 5.00pm
Enjoy a walk of 7 to 10 miles led by the Minsteracres team through the beautiful countryside around Minsteracres.

Quiet Day of Reflection during Lent
28 February, Sr Rosarie Spence RSM, 7 March, Kathryn Turner, 14 March, Sr Anne McCarthy & 21 March, Sr Sheila McNamara, 10.00am – 4.00pm

An opportunity to step aside during the season of Lent, listen to God in scripture and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. Lunch will be provided.

For further information or to book please contact Minsteracres Retreat Centre
01434 673248 | info@minsteracres.org

Centre for Prayer and Mission

Exploring Scripture
Mondays 1.30pm-3.30pm
For those who wish to go deeper in understanding the Word of God. We are half way through Women of the Gospels which is different to anything we have heard before and is proving both popular and challenging.

On-going Formation
Tuesdays 1.00pm-3.00pm
Following Jesus then and now as Disciples.

Prayer Shawl Ministry
Thursday 8th February
1.30pm-3.30pm
We meet every second Thursday of the month. All done in the context of prayer and ministry and company.

For further information or to book please contact Sr Michael on
0191 5813249