

MONDAY
28 FEBRUARY
 1 Peter 1:3-9
 Psalm 111
 Mark 10:17-27

TUESDAY
1 MARCH
 1 Peter 1:10-16
 Psalm 98:1-5
 Mark 10:28-31

WEDNESDAY
2 MARCH
 Ash Wednesday
 Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
 or Isaiah 58:1-12
 Psalm 51:1-18
 2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:10
 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 or John 8:1-11

THURSDAY
3 MARCH
 Deuteronomy 30:15-end
 Psalm 1
 Luke 9:22-25

FRIDAY
4 MARCH
 Isaiah 58:1-9a
 Psalm 51:1-5, 17-18
 Matthew 9:14-15

SATURDAY
5 MARCH
 Isaiah 58:9b-end
 Psalm 86:1-7
 Luke 5:27-32

REFLECTION

In the middle of this week everything changes. The Gospel readings on Monday and Tuesday provide the trailer: Jesus tells the rich man to give up everything to follow him, and it proves to be too tall an order. The disciples are perplexed at his words: **“How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”**



And then it is Ash Wednesday, and Lent. We step onto the road that will lead to the place of death. We are forcibly reminded of our own frailty and mortality. We are like the first disciples, wanting the easy way, misunderstanding God’s ways. Whichever Gospel reading we choose, we are urged not to think we are less sinful than others.

In the days that follow, we explore the hard implications of being a follower of Christ. The cross is for us too. And at the end of the week, Isaiah offers us advice: it is not all about us, but about the needs of others. We are challenged to know our need, and see one another’s need, and live accordingly.

PRAYER

Holy God,
 Our lives are laid open before you.
 Rescue us from the chaos of sin
 and through the death of your Son
 bring us healing and make us whole
 in Jesus Christ our Lord.

HOLY COMMUNION

PART V – THE DISMISSAL

You might argue that the name a church community chooses for the service in which bread and wine are shared reflects that church’s understanding of the celebration. If it is Holy Communion, the emphasis is on building a loving community, focused around the presence of Christ. If it is the Lord’s Supper, then the events at the altar become a re-telling of a story from long ago, albeit a story remembered with love and respect. If it is the Eucharist, then praise and thanksgiving are at the heart of everything. We need, I think, to keep all those elements balanced in our thoughts and our theology, but perhaps the term Mass has most to offer us as we engage with what the different parts of the service mean for us.

The word Mass has its roots in Latin words that concluded the service for centuries: *Ite. Missa est* – meaning **“Go. You are sent.”** This is the point of it all. Having met with Jesus in bread and wine, having been strengthened and renewed by his Spirit, we are, each one of us, sent out on a mission (that root again) to live his risen life and share his love with the world. Faith is never just something to occupy an hour on a Sunday morning. The Church exists to make a difference so it is quite right that some congregations are reminded, as they go through the doors, that: **“Worship is over – now real service has begun.”**

We are given God’s blessing to sustain us (a sign that God’s love goes with us, no matter what struggles we face beyond the door). Often, that blessing comes with the sign of the cross made over the people – just one more reminder that, baptised into Christ’s death, we go out to live cross-shaped lives, based on self-sacrifice and loving service, so that we can both tell and be good news in our communities.

“Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”
“In the name of Christ. Amen.”

During Lent we will be studying one of the modern classics of Christianity, C. S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*, with Jane Williams. The articles will not assume knowledge of the book, although you may want to read it in advance.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

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 and
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Week next before Lent

Monday 28 February
 to Saturday 5 March
 2022