



St Mary's
Parish

Serving
the
Community

Serving
the
Family

Serving
the
City



Perpetual Lent

The pandemic is already a period of mourning.

By Claudia Avila Cosnahan

Every Lenten season is ushered in with the reading from the prophet Joel 2: 12–13, *return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God.* How does one enter a time of fasting, weeping, and rending of hearts when you feel like you've already been in one for so long—when COVID-19, racism, xenophobia, political drama, ecclesial division, and the Capitol insurrection have kept us in a state of mourning and weeping for the past year? The pandemic closed many parishes during the Lenten season of 2020, and even though the liturgical seasons have come and gone, I find myself—and I'd wager that many are with me—in a state of perpetual Lent.

So what is to be done? This Lent presents us with an opportunity to examine the desert that we have been living in for the past year. If Church leaders and institutions wish to lead us in our Lenten spiritual journey, it is imperative that they unequivocally acknowledge the seriousness of the times and the horrors the pandemic has wrought. They need to provide opportunities for people to unpack the traumas of lost livelihood, lost loved ones, racism, and xenophobia. They need to raise up their voices and recommit to a pastoral, merciful, and spiritual engagement with society, lest the Church lose itself in political divisions. To not do this would be a disservice to those in need of healing and justice; a disservice to those in need of conversion, because they have hardened their hearts and refused to accept the truth of our social ailments; and a disservice to everyone in between. Our Lenten promises, practices, and ministries should orient us toward these aims.

I always keep the end in mind when I begin my Lenten journey: the grace of Easter. Although I may currently find myself in an emotional state of perpetual Lent, there have been glimpses of the resurrection, moments of joy and hope. In a way, an unexpected grace of this past year has been a heightened awareness that life is in fact a season of Lent with glimmers of divine incarnation, death, and resurrection. When Lent invites us to enter the desert—to return to God with our whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning—it is actually an invitation to recognize that we are already there, because there is suffering and injustice somewhere.

Contacts: Fr Fachtna McCarthy, Administrator, Fr Patrick Claffey C.C. Fr Josip Levaković C.C., Deacon Greg Pepper Tel 01-6600075

Streaming and Website www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie email: info@stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie

Child Protection: <http://www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie/ministries/child-protection/> also www.csp.dublindiocese.ie

Streaming also at www.churchservices.tv/haddingtonroad

Funded by Living the Joy of the Gospel Campaign



The Transcendent Adventure

If our secular contemporaries see that our faith is an invitation to live abundantly, they might become excited. Most art—novels, films, poetry or whatever— explore what it means to love. Christianity makes peoples hearts burn within them, like the disciples on the way to Emmaus, if people see that Christianity is not a moral code designed to keep us in order but a vibrant way of life. In all of the Abrahamic religions this begins with being addressed. This does not mean hearing spooky voices in the night. Great art summons us; our parents, friends and teachers might do so too. The encounter of Christians with our Lord is not a bizarre event remote from the experience of other human beings. There is at least a lingering sense, even in Western culture, that life is not, as Henry Ford said, just one damned thing after another, but a vocation. Life beckons.

After they are addressed by the Lord, what happens next to the disciples is odd. Jesus summons the fishermen to follow him on an adventure that led them, puzzled and dismayed to Jerusalem. There they would witness his horrible death, and be propelled thence by the Risen Lord to the ends of the unknown world. They would leave behind all that gave them identity and a living, and become ‘fishers of human beings’, a task beyond their comprehension. Often they would wonder who they were and what it was all about. Following Christ would send them on a terrifying and mortal adventure. They nearly all ended up by being murdered. Daniel Berrigan SJ, the peace activist, loved to say: “If you want to follow Jesus, you better look good on wood.”

Christianity makes the strange claim that to be fully alive means embarking on a perilous journey that may cost you everything..

IN MEMORIAM

11am. Stephanie Kennedy, Anniversary
Sunday 28 February
Miriam McMahan, Anniversary

Support Services for Older and Vulnerable People

Irish Hospice Foundation – Living with Loss

We are now accepting bookings for the 2021 series of Workshops on Loss and Bereavement which will be delivered online via Zoom from January – June. Details and booking process can be found on the following link <https://hospicefoundation.ie/education-training/bereavement-training/workshops/>

Aware – Support & Self Care Groups

If you, or those with whom you work wish to connect with people in relation to your mental wellbeing, please consider using the Phone In and Zoom Support & Self Care Groups, the Support Line or Support Mail, now and throughout the holiday season. These services provide support, coping skills and information – and most importantly help people who are in distress to know and feel that they are not alone in their experience. For more information about the groups <https://www.aware.ie/support/support-groups/> and all of our services on www.aware.ie

ALONE

Alone national support line for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Professional staff are available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance where necessary. The support line is open Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm, by calling **0818 222 024**.

SeniorLine

SeniorLine is a national, confidential listening service for older people, run by trained older volunteers. If you are feeling worried, stressed or isolated at this very unnerving time, please feel free to ring this **FREEPHONE** service anytime between 10am and 10pm on any day of the week on **1800 80 45 91**.

Women’s Aid

The Women’s Aid 24hr National Freephone Helpline offers confidential information, support and understanding to women who are being abused by current or former boyfriends, partners or husbands.

Tel: 1800 341 900; Tel: +353 1 678 8858;

Email: info@womensaid.ie

Men’s Aid

Men’s Aid Ireland formerly known as Amen, is the only dedicated national service supporting men and their families experiencing Domestic Violence in Ireland.

Tel: 01-5543811; Tel: 01-5394277; E-

mail: hello@mensaid.ie

ISPCC Dublin

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) is Ireland’s national child protection charity.

Call: 01 676 7960; Email: ispcc@ispcc.ie

The Samaritans

Available round the clock, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you need a response immediately, it’s best to call on the phone. This number is **FREE** to call.

Tel: 116 123 Email: samaritans.org