

# Lent

## 2023



CEIST

Catholic Education  
An Irish Schools Trust



**“Shake off all your sins – it is the Lord who speaks –  
and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.”  
(Ez: 18:31)**



**The season of Lent is a time of preparation for Easter. It is an opportunity for us to grow in our awareness of God’s presence in our lives. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday.**

**Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, and yet it is one of the days during the liturgical year on which very large numbers of people participate in the ceremony of the distribution of ashes.**

**Ashes were an ancient symbol of repentance; they remind us of our mortality. On this day we recognise our human frailty. When we are marked with ashes we acknowledge our need to change ourselves at a deeper level and our willingness to enter into Lent as a time during which we will strive towards an inner conversion of heart.**

**The word ‘Lent’ comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for spring -‘lencten’ (lengthening). It is a time during which the earth shows signs of change and growth. Lent is a time during which we undertake a spiritual journey lasting six weeks; a time of spiritual growth for ourselves.**

**The forty days of Lent reflect the traditions of the Scriptures: the forty days of the flood; the forty days during which the Israelites wandered in the desert; the forty days which Jesus spent in the desert after his baptism.**

**Lent is traditionally the time for those wishing to become members of the Church to prepare for Baptism. In the early Church penitents (those doing public penance for serious sin), together with the rest of the Christian community, accompanied these ‘catechumens’ in their spiritual journey and prepared themselves to renew their baptismal vows at Easter.**

**In our Church today those wishing to become Catholics follow the traditions of the early Church by participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. We too can journey with them in their preparation for baptism by opening our own hearts and minds to self examination and self discipline during these weeks before Easter.**

## Liturgy for Ash Wednesday

This time of prayer is an opportunity for all to become aware of the call of Lent and to become aware of the individual commitment they need to make to become more Christ-like.

### Leader:

Lord Jesus, gather us.  
Gather our thoughts and hearts to you.  
You are the source of hope and goodness.  
As we come to you, Lord Jesus,  
we realise that we have been distracted by many things.  
Guide our thoughts, our hearts, our lives as we turn to you this Lent.  
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.



**All:** Amen.

### Scripture Reading: Luke 19

**Reader 1:** *Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

### Leader:

We take a moment to recall the story of Zacchaeus...we recognise his curiosity to see who Jesus was..... and his openness to respond to Jesus' invitation to him..... help us to have the courage to turn to you this Lent.

**Our Response is 'We turn to you, O Lord.'**

**Reader 2: From anger and doubt, we turn to kindness and hope. (R)**

**Reader 2: From violence, we turn to peace. (R)**

**Reader 2: From name calling and bad treatment of others, we turn to love one another.(R)**

**Reader 2: From selfish acts, we turn to generosity of spirit. (R)**

**Reader 2: From unfairness and prejudice, we turn to justice and equality. (R)**

**Reader 2: From material wealth, we turn to the riches of your Kingdom. (R)**

**Reader 2: From popularity contests, we turn to being our real selves. (R)**

**Distribution of Ashes** Lord, as we are marked with these ashes,  
may we turn away from sin and grow in faithfulness to your gospel.  
**Amen**



## Prayer of the Faithful

We pray for the people of Syria and Turkey who have been left grief stricken, injured and homeless following the devastating earthquake recently. May our lenten almsgiving serve to ease the suffering and injustice faced by these people and others around the world.



For your gift of the earth to us, O Lord, that we may have a renewed sense of respect for our common home. Help us to realise the effects our choices have on the world around us and to work for climate justice at home and abroad.

For those places in the world that have been affected by war. We remember in particular the people of Ukraine and pray for an end to war.

Loving God, we pray that individuals, communities and governments can work together to address the root causes of poverty and inequality in order to achieve a just world for all.

We pray to the Lord.

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of learning. We pray for children who cannot attend school due to conflict, natural disasters and emergencies. May we always appreciate the gift of learning as a way to build a brighter future for all. We pray to the Lord.

## Our Father

**Leader:** Conscious that we are people who are forgiven by God and called to forgive one another, together we pray the words that Jesus gave us....

***Our Father.....***

## Concluding Prayer

God our Father, You formed us from the dust of the earth and brought us to new life in Christ through the waters of Baptism.

We ask you to change our hearts as we journey through these 40 days of Lent.

Help us to see Jesus in everything we meet and to serve him in all persons, especially the poor the sick and the lonely.

By your grace may our prayers and sacrifices this Lent help us to grow closer to each other and to you as one family in Jesus

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord

Amen.

**First week of Lent:  
(Matt. 6:7-15)**



Jesus said to his disciples:

***“In your prayers do not babble as the pagans do for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him. So you would pray like this:***

***Our Father in heaven,  
May your name be held holy,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done’  
on earth as in heaven.***

***Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive those who are in debt to us.  
And do not put us to the test,  
But save us from the evil one.***

***Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either”.***

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Leader:**

Lord, move our hearts to stand up against the injustices of the world. Give us the courage to stand in solidarity with those who do not have a voice and to work with them to build a better future.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of water and how it gives life to humans, animals and plants. May each of us respect our water supplies and have a sense of responsibility in protecting our rivers, lakes and oceans.



### TRYING HARDER

Let us pray that we will try harder to show love in all the things that we say and do and in all the choices that we make during this season of Lent. May we always be people of love and forgiveness. As we journey through Lent may we become closer to God and learn to live in a new way. As we remember your death, Jesus, we know that it was a sign of God's great love for us. Live in our hearts this Lent and help us to share this love with our families, friends, and everyone that we meet. Amen

### FOR FORGIVENESS

Dear God, we pray today to ask your forgiveness for the times when we turned away from your love. Give us the courage to be honest with ourselves and to see ourselves as we truly are. May we try to see the best in the people we meet today. There may be people in the room who have been cruel and hurtful. Give us the strength to try to let go of the hurt, forgive them and move on. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

### JUDGE NOT

During Lent we talk a lot about giving up something we enjoy. Are there things that we do in our lives which we don't necessarily enjoy but which we could still do with giving up? Do we, for example, pass judgement on others unfairly and without giving them a chance? Are these judgements we make hurtful to others. This Lent help me to look deeper into the people I meet. Grant me wisdom and understanding in my interactions with the people I meet.

We pray to the Lord for those who are suffering. Do I notice if someone around me is struggling? Or do I avoid them and their issue? Am I a good listener? Am I an understanding person? Can I do something to help someone this Lent that I know is struggling?

Loving God, protect and comfort those who are suffering at this time. Help me to recognise someone who is going through a rough time. Help me to be a good listener and to be understanding of other people's problems. Amen

### FOR THE SICK

God our Father, we think today of people who are sick in mind or body. Help them to accept the cross that they bear. May they have family and friends to support them in their time of need. We give thanks today for the doctors and nurses who work tirelessly for the good of their patients. We ask that you be with those who care for a sick relative at home. Sometimes this is not an easy task, emotionally or financially. We think of anyone who struggles with ill health this Lent as we say: **Hail Mary...**

### FOR FAMILY

What does my family need this Lent? What kind of a family member am I? Am I a peacemaker? Am I grateful for everything that my family does for me? Do I contribute? Loving God, I pray for my family today. Watch over all of us and keep us safe. Help our home to be a place of peace and love. We remember families who are in difficulty because of addiction, unemployment or violence. Protect them and keep them safe. We pray to the Lord. **Our Father...**



## Second week of Lent

(Luke 6:36-38)

Jesus said to his disciples:

***“Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back”.***

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Prayer of the Faithful

The response to our petitions is ***Create in us a clean heart, O God.***

- For the courage to grow in faithfulness to your Gospel...(R)
- For the courage to be instruments of change.....(R)
- For all who experience exclusion.....(R)
- For those whose lives are marred by injustice.....(R)
- For the places of war and conflict in our world.....(R)

**Leader:** Mindful of the God, who calls us to live lives of justice and peace, together we say,  
***Our Father.....***

Come As You Are  
Come as you are, that's how I love you.  
Come as you are, feel quiet at home.  
Close to my heart, loved and forgiven.  
Come as you are.  
Why stand alone?  
No need to fear, love knows no limits,  
No need to fear, love never ends.  
Don't run away shamed and disheartened.  
Rest in my love, trust me again.  
I came to all sinners, not just the virtuous.  
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.  
Each time you fail to live by my promise.  
Why do you think I love you the less?  
Come as you are,  
That's how I love you.  
Come as you are, trust me again  
Nothing can change the love that I bear you,  
All will be well,  
Just come as you are.



## **Third Week of Lent (Luke 18:9-14)**

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else.

***“Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, ‘I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here, I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get’. The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner’. This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.”***

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Leader:**

***Living God, when we close our hearts  
to the gift of your word,  
we end up closing our hearts  
to the gift of our sisters and brothers.  
Open our hearts this Lent that we might hear your word  
and live its invitation of love in our lives.  
Amen***

Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.  
[Mark 1:15]



## **Fourth Week of Lent** **(John 7:25. 28-30)**

*Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Isn't this the man they want to kill? And here he is speaking freely and they have nothing to say to him!"*

*Then as Jesus taught in the Temple, he cried out:*

*"Yes you know me and you know where I have come from. Yet I have not come of myself: no, there is one who sent me and I really come from him; and you do not know him, but I know him because I have come from him, and it was he who sent me".*

*They would have arrested him then. But because his time had not yet come no one laid a hand on him.*

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Leader:**

*Loving God,  
you send me to serve the needs of others.  
May I recognise your Presence in the people I meet today ...  
my family and co-workers, neighbours, and friends,  
all who cross my path.  
May I notice your Presence  
in the different moments of my day,  
the usual daily tasks and the unexpected phone call or the  
chance encounter, and the frustrating tasks.  
May I be encouraged and strengthened by your Presence  
in each and every moment.  
Amen*

Remember, man, that you are dust and to dust you will return  
[Genesis 3:19]



## Fifth Week of Lent

(John 3:16-17)

***Jesus told Nicodemus: "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. God did not send his Son into the world to judge its people. He sent him to save them!"***

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Prayer of the Faithful

***Response: Lord Hear our Prayer***

For those who are unjustly treated because of race, gender, disability or poverty, that we may have the courage and strength to stand up and speak out against all forms of injustice (R)

For families who have been displaced from their homes, that with the support of aid agencies and their community they will be able to find a new place of belonging and meaning. (R)

For our world. May there be an end to every form of injustice. Help us to feel genuine compassion and offer generous help to those who are most in need. (R)

That we may see Christ in all we meet and that everyone will know dignity, respect and love. (R)

Our Father.....

## **Praying in Lent 2023**

These prayers could be used as part of any liturgy held during Lent in your school.



### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

For the beauty of creation, planet, animals, vegetation, flora and fauna, humans.....  
for your relationships,  
for the gift of belonging to your faith community/parish,  
for all those who served the country during the pandemic  
for all those throughout the world who brought their expertise together to create the vaccine  
for the gift of nature and creation as a teacher  
for the yearning for life, the resilience against the odds,  
for the compost which gives new life in its dying,  
for surviving the Pandemic.

### **Prayer for Equality**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
in your ministry you were approached by people  
of many different nations and cultures.  
You listened to their cry for help,  
treated them with love and compassion,  
and brought them healing and wholeness.  
In our own time may we provide to all those who are suffer  
the help that they need and the care that they require.  
May we respond to the invitation of the Holy Spirit  
to dream of a world made new where the poor are not forgotten  
but are given the opportunity to live and flourish with good health and equal prospects.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Dear Lord,

We praise you in this Easter season. Change our lives,  
change our hearts to be messengers of Easter joy and hope.  
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord  
forever. Amen.



### **Laudato si Prayer**

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts

of those who look only for gain

at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united

with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle

for justice, love and peace.

**Pope Francis**

### **Daily Lenten Prayer**

Today Lord, I choose life,

I choose your love and the challenge to live it and share it,

I choose hope, even in moments of darkness,

I choose faith, accepting you as Lord and God,

I choose to let go of some part of my burdens, day by day handing them over to you,

I choose to take hold of your strength and power ever more deeply in my life.

May this truly be for me a time of new life, of change, challenge and growth.

May I come to Easter with a heart open to dying with you and rising to your new life, day by day.

Amen