

Christian Aid at Lent

Something to think about

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent and a day of preparing to set aside the next six weeks for considering how we live our lives together with God, a day to consider our own mortality and our shared humanity. From dust we are and to dust we shall all return.

As the threshold for Lent, it can be considered a 'liminal' time – a time which can bring change and transformation for individuals and communities. This time might involve a more focused time of prayer, reflection or even fasting.

Standing on this threshold, we are invited to hear the words written in Isaiah 58:6-7
"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?"

As we enter a period of reflecting or fasting we can become aware of what we crave, more alert to the compulsions that control us. From there, we can explore ways of naming these compulsions before God and looking for ways of being free from them. Whilst vital for the deepening of our inner lives we must find a way for this to turn into action or we risk losing ourselves in our own piety. Global change, in the first instance is an inside job, but it must move on from there. Repentance - the U-turn change of direction, must find expression in our lives. Faith must result in action. May this time of fasting be a time when our senses are heightened so we can see and to take notice of those who are held by the bonds of injustice, those who are held by the yoke of oppression and how may we work with them to loosen and break. That together we might shout out, to not hold back and to fast in a way that makes our voices heard on high.

Something to do

What might you do to turn faith into action this lent? How might we give energy to raise the awareness of the suffering of others?

Something to pray

*O God, advocate of all who are oppressed,
You shatter our illusions of righteousness
and unmask our divided hearts,
in order that we might be filled with longing for justice and generosity
and so be made whole.
And as justice and generosity
are true marks of a heart turning towards you,
let our actions as well as our intentions
bear witness for the longing of our hearts. Amen.*

Christian Aid invites us to give thanks for our vaccinations. If you would like to help others, you can visit the website: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>