

Why and how to pray?

Although we have only just celebrated Christmas, and New Year, the church's year hurtles forward. The 18th February is the first Sunday of Lent.

Lent is one of the church's penitential seasons, the other being Advent. During the forty days of Lent Christians are encouraged to pause, reflect and examine their consciences. For Christians prayer is integral to the examination of character and, it is through prayer that we are pruned and nurtured. Prayer has the wonderful effect of changing us and the way we view and interact with the world. Prayer builds up our reservoirs of hope and compassion. Prayer facilitates action and leads to reconciliation. As a priest I am far more concerned with whether prayer changes me than whether prayer changes God's mind.

This Lent we are offering a three week course on prayer. The course starts on 22nd February with me leading a session on the Lord's Prayer. The next two sessions (on Swedish and Benedictine models of prayer) will be on the 1st and 15th March. If you would like to attend please just pop along to the St. Laurence Room at 7:30 pm.

I would also like to suggest that this Lent we purposefully pray for the state of the world; a world which seems so vulnerable and broken. The Coventry Liturgy of Reconciliation feels particularly apt:

For the hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class; **Father, forgive**

For the covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own; **Father, forgive**

For the greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth; **Father, forgive**

For our envy of the welfare and happiness of others; **Father, forgive**

For our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee; **Father, forgive**

For the lust which dishonours the bodies of man, women and children; **Father, forgive**

For the pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God; **Father, forgive**

Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.

Why not try praying this simple liturgy of reconciliation each and every day during Lent? It might just make an enormous difference both to you and to the world around us.

In Christ, Andrew