

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE CHAPLAINCY



EDITORIAL

Here we are now in March, the days are getting longer and at the end of the month the clocks go forward, and we will begin to have lighter evenings. Are signs of spring around us, daffodils are blooming, and blossom is beginning to emerge. All signs of hope.

The Government has begun its lengthy road out of lockdown, schools are back, and the vaccination programme has begun. More signs of hope after a long winter and for many the most difficult of the three lockdowns we have experienced.

Christians look forward to Easter at the beginning of next month, where we are reminded of the hope God gives us in Christ. But first Christians journey through Lent and anguish of Holy Week. So, this month Fr Vlad our Catholic Chaplain gives some reflections on how he is spending the Christian Season of Lent.

May we all see and find signs of hope in the coming weeks and enjoy both Hot Cross Buns and Easter Eggs if that is our tradition!

CHAT TO A CHAPLAIN – Just to remind you even if we are not always visible in Canary Wharf, we are still happy to catch up over a coffee either in person or virtually! To contact us email us at talktous@canarywharfchaplaincy.co.uk

FR. VLAD, OUR CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN WRITES:

Currently we are in the Christian season of Lent. Lent is a shortened form of the Old English word *lencten*, meaning "spring season" when days lengthen, is as pagan as the word Sunday which, on mainland Europe Latin countries, is 'the day of the lord': *Domingo, Dimanche, Domenica*. Mind you, in Czechia it's *Neděle*: 'do nowt day'.

Akin to Islam's Ramadan – and preceding it by some three centuries – it's a period of preparation and fasting, likely to have been observed before the Easter festival since apostolic times, though the practice was not formalized until the Early Church's First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. If it's six Sundays are excluded, it lasts 40 days,

Lent traditionally, has three key elements: prayer, fasting and almsgiving: supporting the needy. In a word, Lent is a time of sacrifice for Christians. Sacrifice - a word that comes from the Latin *sacrum facere*: to make sacred, holy. As Christians we hope to become more Christlike, by acquiring virtues.

Virtues - good habits - are like any language, acquired by repetition. Virtues make values visible. Remember Frederick Nietzsche's, "I might believe in the Redeemer if his followers looked more redeemed." Lent is here to help realise more deeply that we are beloved by God and thus redeemed: saved, freed, and so we are called to behave accordingly.

Each Lent I select one virtue from each of my PIES – the *Physical, Intellectual Emotional and Spiritual* dimensions of my life - and work on them, building them up, step by step, gradually (not the same as slowly!).

So, my self-disciplines I am working on for this Lent are: *Physically* - going to bed and getting up on time; *Intellectually* - reading the bible more as well as spiritually educational books (Easier in lockdown); *Emotionally* - giving more time to my family; *Spiritually* trying to dedicate more time to prayer, spending more time talking and listening to God who is there in everything and everyone.

It is my hope that the benefits of Lent will not fade before Pentecost or Trinity Sunday. I might even become Frederick Nietzsche's convincing temptation.

For those of you who are keeping the Christian Lent disciplines it is my prayer that it may be a time of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual refreshment for you all.

New Last January WAVE (We Associate Vigorously Enthusiastic) was launched as a mutual and spiritual-support community rooted in friendship, as part of the CW Catholic Community network. If you would like to know more and be part of this network, please email Fr Vlad