

# IN CONVERSATION WITH THE CHAPLAINCY

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Canary Wharf  
Multifaith Chaplaincy



This month's editor: [Lead Retail Chaplain, Mark Ball](#)

## [Chat with a Chaplain](#)

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## Editorial

Welcome to our March edition!

This month we focus on the observation of religious fasting at work, with personal reflections from Mizan Rahman, Store Manager of M&S in Jubilee Place and the new Crossrail Place store, and Amer Peters, Assistant Manager at Bremont, Cabot Place.

It is also great to be able to share some of the highlights from last month with you.

The team took part in a very successful UN World Interfaith Harmony Week event at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. There were lots of interesting conversations – with over two hundred chaplaincy cards distributed.

Lead Chaplain Fiona Stewart-Darling worked with colleagues at State Street to plan and deliver a memorial service for a colleague who had died recently – a moving tribute also broadcast to their offices in Edinburgh, Poland, Abu Dhabi, and South Africa.

And the chaplaincy enjoyed their involvement in the planning and participation of the latest Ethics Series event, in partnership with HSBC, Barclays, EY, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Citi, and hosts Clifford Chance. The distinguished panel engaged the considerable audience with their discussion of the theme, 'Can Culture Survive in Times of Turmoil?'



(L-R) Carlos Conceicao (Partner, Contentious Regulatory at Clifford Chance), Sir Douglas Flint (Chairman of abrdn and IP Group), Revd Dr Fiona Stewart-Darling (Lead Chaplain), Hana Searson (Global Head of Culture Change at Citi), and Susan Liautaud (Chair of Council at LSE)

## Faith Festivals **March**

Christianity	1	St David's Day
Buddhism	6	Magha Puja
Hinduism	7	Sri Chatainya Mahaprabhu's Birthday
Judaism	7	Purim
Hinduism	8-18	Holi
Christianity	17	St Patrick's Day
Islam	23	Ramadan begins
Hinduism	30	Ram Navami

## Fasting

There is perhaps a greater awareness of fasting in society at large today, both because of its increasing popularity as a healthy lifestyle choice, but also because of increasing exposure to it as a spiritual discipline in many of our faith communities.

Fasting exists in various traditions and takes a variety of particular forms. This month's Jewish Purim, Hindu Ram Navami, and Baha'i Naw-Ruz are festivals all traditionally preceded by a preparatory period of fasting.

Islam's holy month of Ramadan begins around the 22nd of March this year. I spoke with Mizan Rahman, Store Manager of M&S in Jubilee Place and the new Crossrail Place store, about his experience of fasting whilst at work:

*'I look forward to Ramadan as an annual opportunity to give myself a spiritual boost. As Muslims we observe the disciplines of prayer, charitable giving, and fasting. Our understanding is that during Ramadan, the spiritual rewards for doing these things increase. For me, fasting is a reminder that faith is about the whole of life: body, mind, and spirit. There is a strong community element to it too, this is something everyone who shares the faith takes part in. At work, I find the hardest thing is the way fasting impacts on my sleep pattern and energy levels. M&S has a very good 'worklife' ethos. As a team in store, we support each other with understanding and encouragement. During Ramadan and the Eid celebration that follows, non-Muslim colleagues happily cover shifts if required. The same thing happens for Christian colleagues when it comes to Christmas.'*

The whole of March this year falls within the Christian season of Lent, during which some traditions include an element of fasting. Amer Peters, Manager at Bremont in Cabot Place, shared with me his personal reflections on keeping Lent and fasting at work:

*'Lent is our forty-day period of preparation leading up to Easter. The bible tells how Jesus fasted for forty days. His is the model we follow, putting ourselves in his sandals, as it were. It is an opportunity to dig deeper and to grow closer in prayer and in faith. In the past, giving something up has been my Lenten discipline – but not always very successfully! This year I decided to try taking the tradition of fasting more seriously. I have had fasting days before but have not fasted for an extended period like this. Being at work, I have a greater sense of flexibility to handle mealtimes differently than when I am sharing them with my family, who are not fasting. I am not eating during the working day, and then breaking the fast when I get home. For me, the main downside of fasting at work is the number of eateries and people eating that surround us! I am managing to resist so far. The self-discipline of it feels good – as does being able to talk about the meaning of faith, and the joys and challenges of living it out in the workplace.'*

Thank you to Mizan and Amer for sharing with us this month!