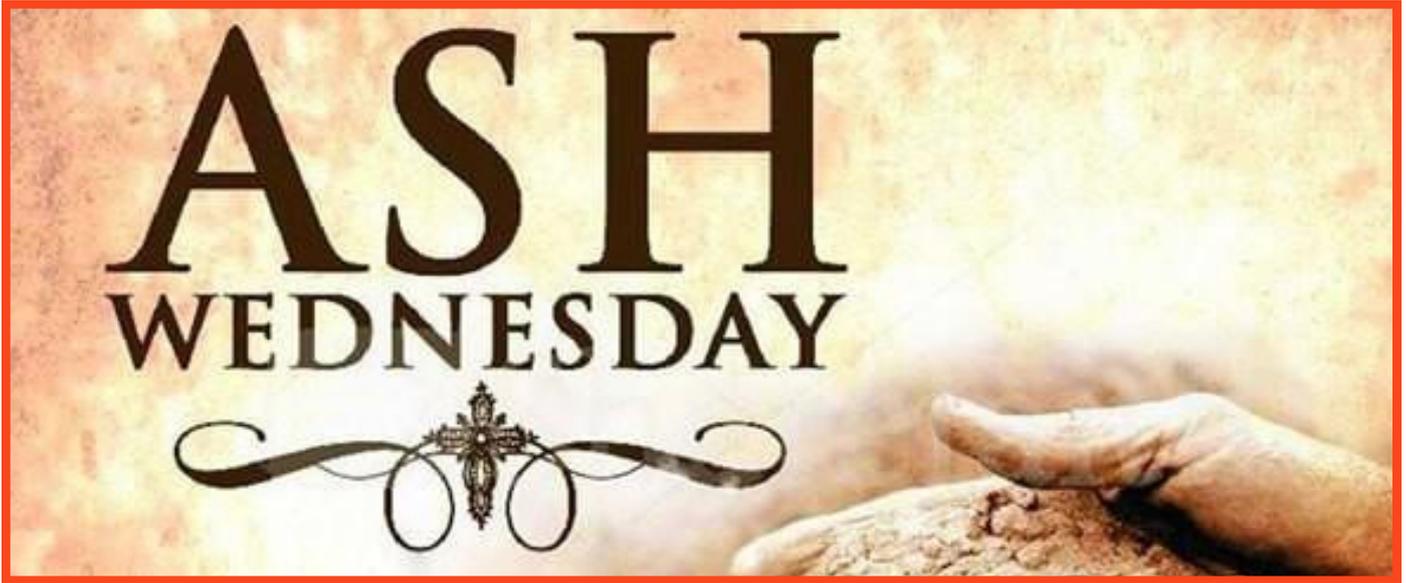




St Mark's Parish

www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au

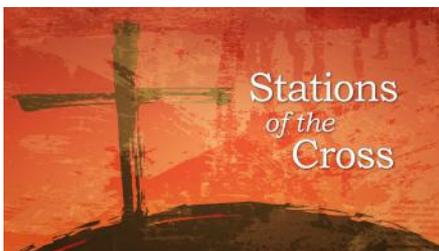


Blessing and Distribution of Ashes:

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us ask God our Father
to bless with the abundance of his grace
these ashes, which we will put on our heads in penitence.

O God, you respond with forgiveness to works of penance,
to our prayers and in your kindness pour out the grace of your  blessing
on your servants who are marked with these ashes,
that, as they follow the Lenten observances,
they may be worthy to come with minds made pure
to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of your Son,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.



**- Stations of the Cross -
The Way of the Cross**
Every Friday during Lent
following 8:00am Mass
Led By Sr Antonia.

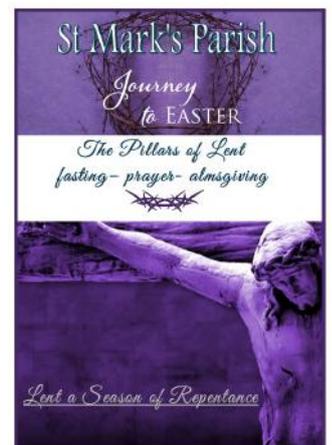
Lenten Observances at St Mark's

Take home...

Project Compassion - collect your envelope or box
Journey to Lent - The Pillars of Lent - collect your
Lenten bulletin for Parish happenings
Little Black (adult) or Purple (children) Book
a donation is appreciated for Little books.

Join us....

At Mass weekdays or Sundays
Join a St Mark's Lenten Group Friday or Saturday
(come for a couple or all sessions)
Pray the Stations of The Cross - the Way of the Cross -
Fridays during Lent.
Receive the Sacrament of Penance
(Confession | Reconciliation) - 11:00am Saturdays



The Holy Father invites us to dedicate Ash Wednesday, March 2, to a day of prayer and fasting for peace.

“I encourage believers in a special way to dedicate themselves intensely to prayer and fasting on that day. May the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war,” he said.

[To read more click here](#)

ASH WEDNESDAY

Entrance Antiphon:

Wis 11:24,25,27

R You are merciful to all, O Lord, and despise nothing that you have made. You overlook people's sins, to bring them to repentance, and you spare them, for you are the Lord our God.

First Reading

Jb 7:1-4, 6-7

A reading from the book of Joel

Rend your hearts and not your clothing.

"Even now," says the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.

"Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing."

Who knows whether the Lord will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him: a grain offering and a drink offering to be presented to the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" Then the Lord became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

Responsorial Psalm:

Ps 51:1-2, 3-4a, 10-11, 12+15 (R.1a+4a)

R Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

V1: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. **R**

V2: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight. **R**

V3: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. **R**

V4: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. **R**

Second Reading:

2 Corinthians 5:20 - 6:2

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

Be reconciled to God, for now is the acceptable time.

We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For our sake God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also, not to accept the grace of God in vain.

For the Lord says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

ASH WEDNESDAY

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 95.7-8

If today you hear God's voice,
harden not your hearts.

Gospel:

Matthew 6.1-6, 16-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Your Father, who sees all that is done in secret, will reward you.

Jesus said to the disciples,

"Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others.

Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

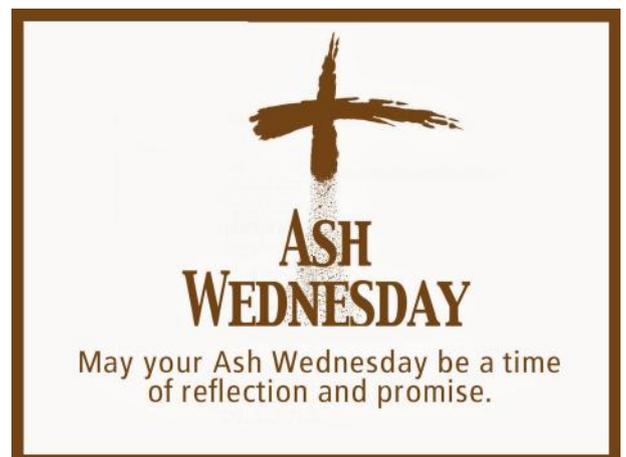
But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Communion Antiphon:

Cf. Ps 1:2-3

R He who ponders the law of the Lord day and night will yield fruit in due season.



The Living Word

ASH WEDNESDAY

Gospel Reflection

Almsgiving, prayer and fasting were the hallmarks of a faithful Jew at the time of Jesus. They could be regarded as ‘pillars’ of the Jewish faith. In fact, in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for ‘almsgiving’ (charitable giving) was the same as the word for ‘righteous’ – to give alms was to be righteous and to be righteous was to give alms. These three pillars were essential elements of the practice of one’s faith. However, as Jesus warns in this passage, these same practices also presented opportunities to draw attention to yourself and ‘big note’ yourself in the eyes of others. Jesus criticises the ‘hypocrites’ who parade themselves in front of others when supposedly doing good works or practising these three pillars of faith. ‘Hypocrite’ is a Greek word that effectively means ‘actor’. So when someone is being a hypocrite they are only acting a part – pretending to be prayerful or pious for the purpose of impressing others. The repetitive structure of the passage is an intentional device to stress the importance of what is being said. It is actually an ancient technique used by story tellers. (It’s like the repetitive pattern often used in telling jokes!) The pattern is: don’t be like the hypocrites; they’ve had their reward; act in a way that is simply between yourself and God. Sometimes in Lent the emphasis is too rigorously placed on the observable actions of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. Whilst these actions are important, it is actually the purpose behind these actions that is more important than the actions themselves: focusing our attention on our relationship with God. Almsgiving, prayer and fasting help us take the focus off ourselves and turn our focus to God.

Historical Context – The mark of the cross

The tradition of marking the forehead with ash on Ash Wednesday can be traced back to the ancient Jewish action of dusting oneself with ash as a sign of repentance and mourning for wrongful actions. It was a public declaration of the acknowledgement of the wrong and the commitment to turn one’s life around and try not to make the same mistake again. It still remains a public declaration that during the period of Lent those who wear the cross of ash are going to attempt to turn around their lives and re-focus themselves more fully on God.

Gospel Focus: ‘Your Father’

Jesus repeatedly uses the phrase ‘your Father’ in this passage. In his own language, the word Jesus was using was the equivalent of ‘daddy’ or ‘papa’. It reflects a very intimate and very child-like relationship with God. This was a challenging new way of imaging God for the people of the 1st Century. Jesus’ emphasis on the intimate, loving relationship between God and ourselves is highlighted by his use of ‘your Father’. He doesn’t say ‘my Father’. That same intimate relationship is open to each and every one of us! We are God’s children.

Have you thought? – ‘They have had their reward’

The gospel writer has Jesus repeatedly stating this seemingly dismissive fact. The word ‘reward’ had a very specific meaning in business – it meant ‘paid in full’ – and was often applied to purchase of a slave. In the passage, Jesus is effectively saying, their account has been settled; their fate has been determined. Because they choose to twist religious practices to their own benefit they have sealed their fate – that is their reward! Their ‘reward’ can only be changed by a dramatic change of heart; turning back to God and doing their works for God’s sake, not their own.

Questions for Adults

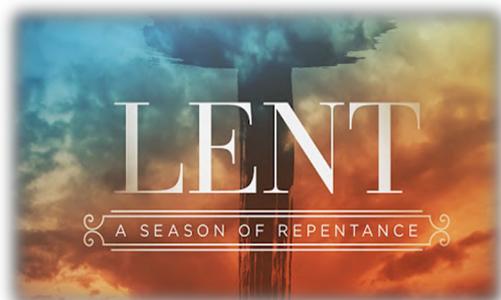
How do you think the disciples reacted to what Jesus said to them in this passage?

How might you respond to those who cite this gospel passage as an argument against receiving the ashes on their forehead?

Where in your own life do you recognise elements of being like the hypocrites that Jesus criticises?

How has your observance of Lent (almsgiving, prayer, fasting) changed over time?

To what do you wish to commit yourself this Lenten season?



Lent ~ Fast: Give: Prepare: Pray:

Ways to Walk Through Lent with your family & friends in Christ

During the liturgical season of Lent, we faithful are asked to seek the Lord in prayer and reading Scripture, to practice self-control through fasting, and to serve by giving alms.

Lent is an ideal season to travel through in a groups with your friends and family because when we partner in Praying, Fasting, and Almsgiving, we keep each other on track, bear each other's burdens, and deepen our faith and friendships. Lent is a great time to reach out to family and friends in Christ and invite them to accompany you through Lent.

There are many ways to experience Lent, but here are some ideas for joining with each other & your community & to emulate the early disciples on the road to Emmaus – they accompanied each other as they came to recognise Christ in their midst.

Learn and practice a new devotion together.

Perhaps your group could learn about the Seven Sorrows Rosary, or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the Angelus. Devotions are a great way to learn a new way to meditate on the life of Jesus – often through the eyes of Our Blessed Mother or a saint. **Attend one of our St Mark's Parish Lenten Groups.**

Make a pilgrimage to a nearby Church. Our country has many Catholic churches to explore. In making a pilgrimage, you will have time to get to know your family and friends in Christ and have some dedicated time for prayer and contemplation. **Have you attended adoration in Silence, taking in St Mark's Stained Glass windows while Praying.**

Participate in Stations of the Cross each Friday. During Lent, we remember Christ's walk to the site of His crucifixion. The meditation helps us to understand the depth of Christ's love for us.

Stations of the Cross at St Mark's Church every Friday Morning during Lent following 8.00am Mass.

Host a recipe exchange of meatless recipes. This will help everyone remember to abstain from meat on Fridays.

Invite your family on a Friday and show off your cooking talents.

Make a decision with your family and friends to give something up together. Does your family love gathering over a cup of coffee? What if you decided to give up the comfort of coffee as a Lenten fast? Think how good that coffee talk will be during the first week of Easter!

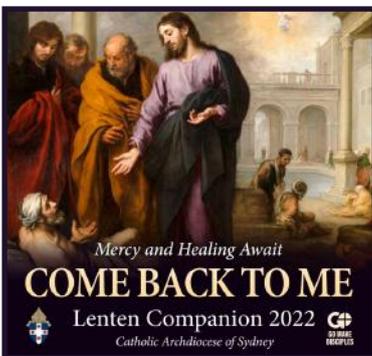
Instead of a night out, meet for a Sunday Mass. Fasting during Lent should include abstaining from meat on Fridays, but it can also involve refraining from doing activities as a sacrifice. **Enjoy Mass as a community of family or friends and re-focus on the foundational relationship that you have with Jesus.**

Feed the hungry. **Reach out and help showing compassion to all in need.** Pope Francis says that "Lent is a favourable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognising in them the face of Christ."

Take up a collection. If your friends or family meet weekly, consider taking up a collection at your gatherings and donating the collection to **Project Compassion for Caritas Australia**

If your friends or family group Prays, Fasts, and gives Alms together this Lent, you may find that your group wants to continue doing some of this Lenten work throughout the year.

Be open to where the Holy Spirit may be prompting your family.



Join St Mark's "Come back to Me" Lenten Group

"Put aside some time for prayer and reflection"

Saturday mornings from 10:30am

upstairs in the Parish Centre - hosted by Martha

5 March, 12 March, 19 March, 26 March, 2 April and 9 April 2022

Friday afternoons from 2:15pm (prior to school pick up)

upstairs in the Parish Centre hosted by Sr Antonia

4 March, 11 March, 18 March, 25 March, 1 April and 8 April 2022

St Mark's Catholic Parish

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Parish Website: www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au



St Mark's Church Hearing
Loop installed

Administrator: Fr Denis Minns OP

Parish Priest: Fr Michael McLean PP

Pastoral Associate: Sr Antonia Nedu ISR

Chair Parish Pastoral Council: Ms Celine Cheng

School Principal: Ms Rachel Bourke

