

Virtual Family Prayer Bag

Dear Parent / Carer,
Here is our virtual Prayer Bag for Ash Wednesday and Lent



Celebrating Ash Wednesday and Lent

Please take some time over the next few days
to come together, as a family, in prayer.



A Message from Bishop David



Dear young friends in Christ,

Ash Wednesday begins the time of Lent. This old English word means “Spring time”, and hopefully, during the weeks of Lent we will see signs that our world is waking up to new life, in the gardens, in the trees, lengthening days and better weather. Lent is an invitation for each of us to wake up to the Gospel in new ways too. So how can we do this? Traditionally, there are three things which Christians do during these weeks of Lent; prayer, fasting and almsgiving. I recently encouraged you to think about saying the rosary more often. Another lovely way of praying, is to choose some words in the Gospel, and to allow these words to sing into our hearts as well as our minds. Imagine that you are having a conversation with Jesus. The Gospel is full of loving words from Jesus to each one of us.

Secondly, we think about fasting from some food or other things. Many of us choose to live without chocolate puddings - or in my case, anything else which puts weight onto an already heavy me! So, give it some thought. Fasting can be hard, but I like to think of it as an opportunity to tell Jesus that I rely on him and him alone, and not on any other things in my life.

Almsgiving is about noticing those who are less fortunate than ourselves, and deciding to do something about that. It might be giving a little something to my school or parish charities. It could involve giving myself generously for a little time every week to serving others, perhaps an elderly person in my community.

Whatever we are doing, we are thinking about the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert. This was an important time in his life, marking the separation between his life as a child and a young man, and his time of ministry to those in need. We also remember the 40 years that the children of Israel spent marching through the desert towards the promised land. How often the people made mistakes and got things wrong. But at the end of the day, they trusted the Lord and found their way to the promised land. How often we make mistakes and get things wrong. The season of Lent reminds us that there is hope for us, and we can work with Jesus to turn things around and get things right.

Let's pray for each other, me for you and you for me, so that together, this Lent will make a difference in our lives.

With every blessing,

✠ David

Rt Revd Dr David J Oakley
Bishop of Northampton

Set aside some time in your day
to gather together for prayer
Make sure you are all sitting comfortably
Light a candle



In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Lent

The Season
of Lent,
begins on
Ash Wednesday.



The day before Lent begins is called
Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day.

‘Shrove’ comes from ‘shriven’
- to be forgiven



**The season of Lent
begins on Ash Wednesday
with the marking of ashes
on our foreheads.**



The season of Lent ends on Holy Thursday



The marking of the cross on our forehead
on Ash Wednesday
is a sign that we are sorry
for all we have done wrong
and that we want to try to be
more like Jesus and come closer
to him everyday.





**When the priest makes the cross
on our forehead he says:
'Turn away from sin
and believe the good news'**

**Lent lasts for 40 days.
40 is a significant number in the Bible.**

**When Noah went into the ark with all the
animals it rained for 40 days and 40 nights!**



Moses led the people of God through the desert for 40 years.



Jesus was tempted by the devil, in the wilderness, for 40 days.

**During Lent we have 40 days to think
about the way we live our lives:
How we speak to others,
and what we do.**

**How could our words and actions be more
loving and caring?**



Lent is a special time
of preparation for the celebration of Easter,
when God invites us to:



Pray more - especially for others.

Do without something we enjoy.

Give something to those in need.





Pray more - especially for others

**Could you make the effort to pray
each day of Lent?**

**Maybe you could say an Our Father
or a Hail Mary
or make up a prayer of your own
each day**



Give something to those in need



Perhaps you could put some money in a charity box, or give some food to the foodbank, or sort out your clothes and toys to give to a charity shop or join in the CAFOD challenge 'Walk for Water'

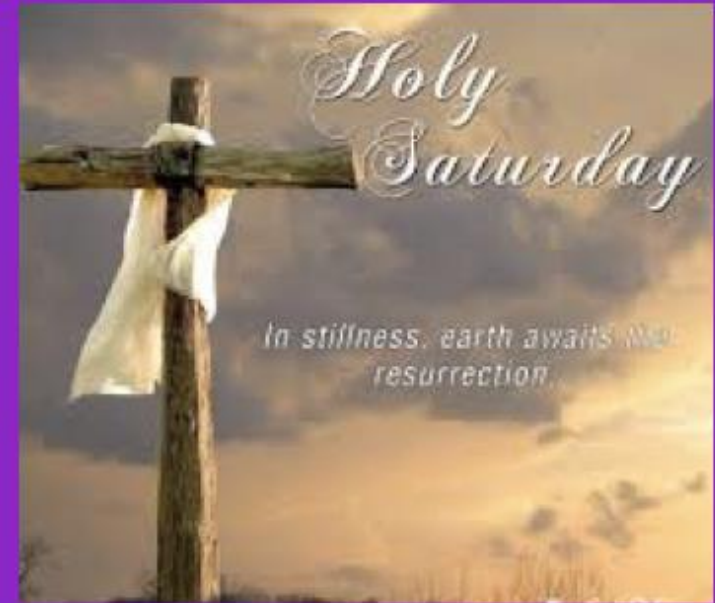


Do without something we enjoy

Could you give up sweets or chocolate for 40 days?
Could you go without your favourite game
or TV programme for the whole of Lent?



**The Lent fast,
for 40 days,
starts on Ash Wednesday
and ends on Holy Saturday**





**Add up the days
from the first day of Lent
to Holy Saturday
and see how many days
there are.....**

**Then
take away the Sundays!
How many days
have you got now?**

**Sunday is the day of Jesus' resurrection
a day of celebration - even in Lent!
So whatever you give up for Lent
you can have on a Sunday!**



A Reading from the Prophet Joel



**It is the Lord who speaks –
‘Come back to me with all your heart.
Turn to the Lord your God again,
for he is all tenderness and compassion.**

Sound the trumpet in Zion!
Order a fast,
proclaim a solemn assembly,
call all the people together,
summon the community,
assemble the old people,
gather all the children,
because the Lord takes pity on his people.'

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God



Let us pray for.....

our families,
our friends,
the lonely,
the homeless,
the sick,
those who look after them
and all those who have died



As we pray together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Amen.



Loving Father in heaven,
the light of your truth gives sight
to the darkness of sinful eyes.
May this season of Lent
bring us the blessing of your forgiveness
and the gift of your light.
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord

Amen



If my brother does me wrong
how should I forgive him?
If my brother does me wrong
how should I forgive him?
'Sev'n times sev'n o!
That's what Jesus says
you know
'Sev'n times sev'n o!
That's what Jesus says.

If my sister lets me down
how should I forgive her?

If my friends won't play with me
how should I forgive them?

This year CAFOD is inviting us to:

Walk for Water

Are you ready to change your life and transform someone else's this Lent?

[Sign up now](#)

Walk for Water is the only Lent challenge you need: 10,000 steps a day - done your way. Every day. For 40 days. Go the distance this Lent and help to end water poverty.

You don't have to get tied in a knot about how to do it: whether you hop it; skip it; slide it; run it; jump it; dance it; stamp it; stomp it. It doesn't matter how you do it, just as long as you put your heart and soul into it.

Sign up now, raise money and do something different to fight poverty.

[Sign up now](#)





**Abdella
walks 10 hours a day
to find water
for his family**



Abdella lives in an extremely remote and mountainous region of Ethiopia. It is one of the hottest places on the planet.



**Clean water is a long way away.
The journey to collect water is so long
he has to leave early from the village while it is still dark.**



"I walk through the dried out riverbed, then climb
into the mountains, then down into a valley,



Can you see Abdella in the photo?



The journey is long and hard. Abdella says:
I feel tired, I feel hungry.





Finally Abdella gets to the water



He is able to fill his container with the clean water and then has to make the long journey back home



By the time he gets back home with the water
He has no time or energy left for anything else.

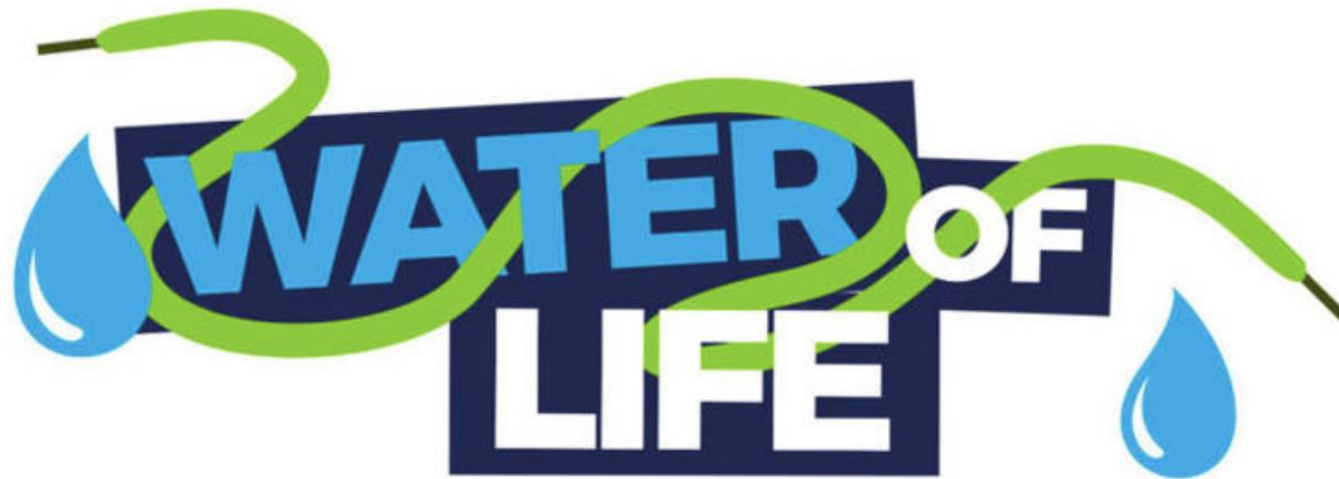
Can we walk by Abdella's side?



In our world 1 in 3 people
don't have clean drinking water.
With CAFOD we can help them.

Don't let people like Abdella walk alone!

Water of Life national assembly



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

[Click here to watch the Cafod Water of Life Assembly](#)

Let us pray

Loving God,
we hear your call to
all who are thirsty
To come to the water.
Pour out your Spirit upon us
and help us to walk alongside
each another.
As a stream wears away stone,
may we reshape our world together
to reflect your kingdom of love for
all.
Amen.

