

IDEAS FOR HELPING FOCUS ON THE MEANING OF LENT

Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As it is such a significant time in the liturgical calendar, we are aware that most parishes will have their own arrangements and traditions for liturgical celebrations during this time.

As you plan for Lent, you may like to incorporate some of the following suggestions and ideas to continue to remind parishioners that Lent is a time when we reach beyond ourselves to assist people in need, particularly the most poor and vulnerable members of our local and global communities.

Suggestions:

PowerPoint – a PowerPoint is available on the Caritas website on the theme of the Bishops' Lenten Appeal. Some parishes use this as a background for quiet reflection before or after Mass, and others use it as a reflection after Communion, accompanied by quiet music. Individual slides from the PowerPoint can also be incorporated into your own parish PowerPoints, to help highlight the links between the Lenten Gospels and the selected programmes which feature in this year's Lent Appeal envelopes and Lenten Reflection Programme.

Sacred space – some parishes create a sacred space in the Church during Lent to highlight our concern for people in need, there is an opportunity to light a candle and offer prayers for our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Others might prefer to dedicate a special space on the parish notice board or in the Church foyer that highlights information about how the parish's donations are being used to support Caritas projects and programmes.

Prayers of the Faithful – please consider including a prayer for the project or programme featured on the Lent Appeal envelopes within your Prayers of the Faithful each week. A list of prayers is attached as a starting point – please feel free to adapt and rewrite these to match your own parish expectations and guidelines.

Symbols – you may wish to display different images, objects and symbols that reflect a theme of the Gospel reading for each week of Lent. For example, some parishes may have a bowl of sand on a table in the first week of Lent to symbolise the wilderness and desert.

Opportunity to respond – during prayer, have an opportunity for parishioners to respond to the theme of Lent each week, e.g. light a candle to symbolise the igniting of our hearts and turning again and again to the voice of God.

Music – include relevant hymns and music during prayer and reflection time.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Please consider including a prayer for the Caritas programme featured in the Bishops' Lenten Appeal materials within your Prayers of the Faithful each week during Lent. You may wish to consider incorporating the following prayers, which are based on the prayers used on the Lent Appeal envelopes. Please feel free to adapt or rewrite according to your parish's own guidelines and expectations:

Week 1: The temptation of Jesus/ Proclaiming community and identity through Radio Timor Kmanek, Timor-Leste

Loving God, e te Atua o te aroha, each us finds ourselves at various times in the wilderness. Help us to remember and reach out to others in their times of vulnerability and trial.

E te Ariki. *Whakarongo mai ki a mātou.*

Week 2: The transfiguration/ From highs to lows in mountainous Nepal

E te Atua, high on the mountains you led the disciples and gave them a glimpse of the glory of your Son, Jesus. Help us to walk with Jesus. Give us the courage to tackle the challenge of the unknown – knowing that you will never leave us or forsake us.

E te Ariki. *Whakarongo mai ki a mātou.*

Week 3: Jesus cleanses the temple/ Upholding human dignity in Papua New Guinea

E te Atua, help us to show compassion for the suffering of all those in need. Give us the faith and courage to challenge injustice. Help us to uphold human dignity – just as Jesus did. May we see each person in the way that you see them, loving God – created in your image and of great worth to you.

E te Ariki. *Whakarongo mai ki a mātou.*

Week 4: Nicodemus visits Jesus/ Bringing light to East Africa

E te Atua, we pray for those living in darkness. Give us the courage to love and accept each other in our challenges and suffering. Touch those who cling to the darkness or are unaware of the darkness; may our loving presence show them the power of your love.

E te Ariki. *Whakarongo mai ki a mātou.*

Week 5: Greeks wish to see Jesus/ The Parihaka story

E te Atua, help us all to be signs of the Glory of God, to shine out in a darkened world, to give hope to those who know no hope. For it is in reaching out to share this life with others that we will become the best and truest image of God that we can be.

E te Ariki. *Whakarongo mai ki a mātou.*

Week 6: The Passion of Christ

E te Ariki, Lord, as we celebrate the paschal mystery this Holy Week, the hope is not merely that we might see Christ die and rise again – the hope is that we will die and rise again. We pray that we will experience Christ's death and resurrection as a reality in our own lives, and in that of our community.

E te Ariki. *Whakarongo mai ki a mātou.*