

Thought for the day – Ash Wednesday 2nd February 2022

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

Holy Inconvenience

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry - Luke 4:1-2

Today is the start of Lent. A time to draw closer to God. The 40 days of Lent follows the example of Jesus time in the wilderness. In the bible, the wilderness, as well as being a physically hard place to be, is also a metaphor for going through hard and difficult times. For Jesus, it was a deliberate inconveniencing of himself in order to focus on his spiritual life. It is important to note, that it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness, not the devil, or circumstances. This was an important part of Jesus preparation, of identifying himself with a suffering world, before He commenced His work. Likewise, in Lent, we are invited by the Spirit, to step out of our comfort zones, to inconvenience our selves, in order to draw closer to God and to those who are suffering in our world, by prayer, study and acts of kindness. Some suggestions are below.

Today, Pope Francis has asked people everywhere to pray and fast for peace in the world. Some of us may be able to go a whole day without eating, for some of us it might be missing one or two meals, and for some of us, giving up food may not be a good idea for medical reasons. There is no one rule when it comes to fasting. We can also fast today in other ways apart from giving up food. We can give up for the day, spending time on social media, give up watching TV and box sets, give up gaming, give up looking at our phone, etc. The idea is to give up something that will be missed, that will cause us some inconvenience. Instead, the time used for that, we pray. We can pray using our own words. we can pray by lighting a candle and being silent. It can also be helpful to pray using words other people have written. Some prayer ideas can be found [here](#). We can also inconvenience our selves by making a journey to church, to light a candle and pray for peace (I do realise that is easy for me to say as I live only 3mns away!) However, this is also a form of fasting. Please see below for times when the church will be open today.

We can take heart, that we are joining millions of people around the world, today, and over the period of Lent.