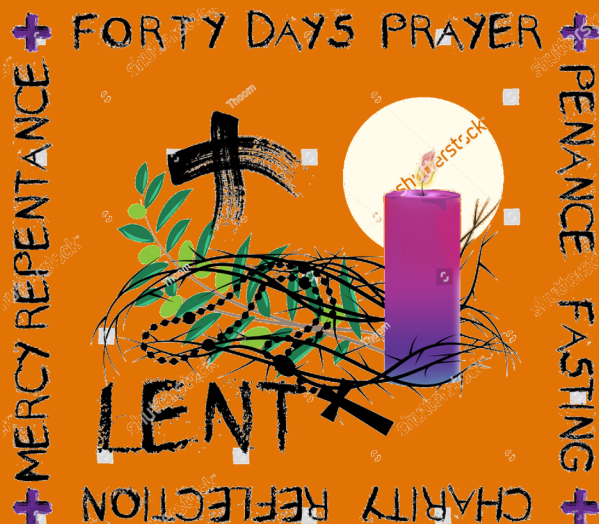


THE M Magazine

35p

ST BARNABAS with CHRIST CHURCH, WORCESTER



MARCH 2026

ST BARNABAS WITH CHRIST CHURCH

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	Mary James	01905 455214
Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO):		
	Rachel Chalmers	07787 128345

WEBSITE: www.stbarnabaschurchworcester.co.uk

SERVICES:

Sunday	10am	Eucharist
Wednesday	10am	Said Eucharist

PARISH OFFICE:

To book a baptism or marriage (or to have banns read), send message through our website:

www.stbarnabaschurchworcester.co.uk

MAGAZINE DEADLINE: Penultimate Sunday of each month.
Please e-mail contributions to jackiecampbell@talktalk.net

Registered Charity number 1158894



TAKING SOMETHING UP FOR LENT

You are reading this when our journey through Lent has already begun. But it's never too late to participate.

When we think about Lent, many of us think about giving something up. Chocolate. Alcohol. Social media. Crisps. We brace ourselves for forty days of willpower and self-denial, counting down to Easter Sunday. And of course, there is real value in that. Letting go of something can help us notice how tightly we cling to it. It can create space. It can remind us that God is the one who truly sustains us.

But what if, this year, we thought about Lent not only as a time to give things up, but also as a time to take something up?

Lent is a season of preparation.

Lent prepares us for Easter. It is a journey — one that follows Jesus as he turns his face towards Jerusalem, towards challenge, suffering, and ultimately new life.

Preparation isn't only about subtraction. Sometimes it is about addition. About choosing, intentionally, to grow in love.

Instead of only asking, "What shall I give up?" we might also ask, "What shall I take up?"

We might take up a daily habit of prayer — even if it is just five quiet minutes with a candle lit and a simple, "Lord, here I am." We might take up reading a Bible passage slowly and thoughtfully, a few verses at a time. We might take up gratitude, writing down one thing each day that reminds us of God's goodness.

Lent can be a time when we practice loving others more intentionally. We might take up kindness. A deliberate act each day: a note of encouragement, a phone call to someone who is lonely, patience in a frustrating moment.

We might take up generosity. Not only financial giving, but generosity of spirit — assuming the best of others, offering forgiveness, giving time where it is needed.

Or perhaps we might take up justice. Learning more about a situation of need in our community or our world, praying about it, and taking one small step to make a difference.





Taking something up does not mean Lent becomes easy or comfortable. In fact, it can be more challenging than giving something up. Choosing to pray when we feel busy. Choosing to forgive when we feel hurt. Choosing to serve when we feel tired. These are not small things.

But Lent is not meant to be about proving how disciplined we are. It is about drawing closer to Jesus. It is about allowing God to shape our hearts.

When we take something up, we are saying, “Lord, grow something new in me.” We are making space for God not just by emptying, but by planting.

Of course, giving something up can still be part of that. Perhaps what we lay down creates the room we need to take something up. We might give up scrolling in the evening so that we can take up reading the Bible. We might give up a small luxury and take up giving that money to a local charity. The two can work together.

The heart of Lent is not deprivation for its own sake. It is transformation. It is about walking honestly with God — acknowledging our need, trusting in grace, and opening ourselves to change.

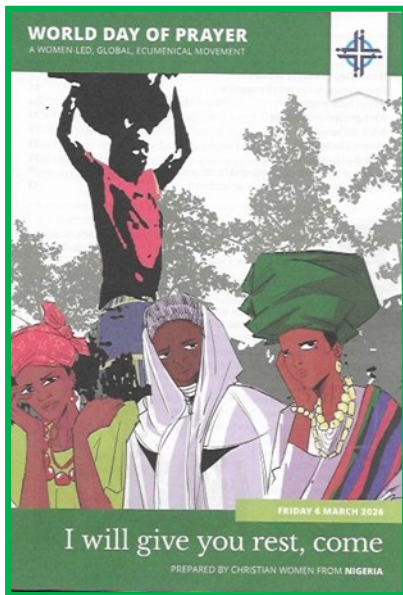
So as Lent begins, perhaps the question is not simply, “What will I give up?” but also, “What will I take up that will help me love God and love others more?” Whatever we choose, let it be something that turns our hearts towards Christ. Let it be something that makes room for hope.

And remember: we do not walk this journey alone. Lent leads us, step by step, towards the joy of Easter morning — towards resurrection, renewal, and the promise that God is always at work, bringing new life out of even the most barren places.

May this be a holy and hopeful Lent for us all.

Rev'd Rosie Moss

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



*Friday March 6th
10.30
St Barnabas Church*

Theme: "I will give you rest."
Short Service written by the
Christian women of Nigeria

The theme is *I will give you
rest, come*

Refreshments after the service
(including Nigerian snacks)
Everyone welcome.

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WALKING THROUGH LENT

What shoes will you wear?
Where were they made?

How do your shoes feel?
How do you feel in them?

Where will you tread?
What footprints will you leave
behind?



SHARED LAMENT

Writer Julian Barnes describes the famous Aria from Gluck's opera Orpheus and Eurydice as "the greatest song of grief I know". The song cries out 'What will I do without my Eurydice?' In the Greek myth Orpheus has promised not to turn round and look at his beloved, having been granted permission to lead her back up from the Underworld. He cannot resist and this time he loses her forever.

Julian Barnes was married to his first wife Pat for twenty nine years. She was diagnosed with a brain tumour and died very quickly, just over a month later.

On radio 4's 'This Cultural Life' the author talks about the devastation of this loss and how a production of Orpheus and Eurydice spoke to him. He describes an opera as being very different from a play. The characters are not only acting. They are moved, "to sing of their fiercest emotions".

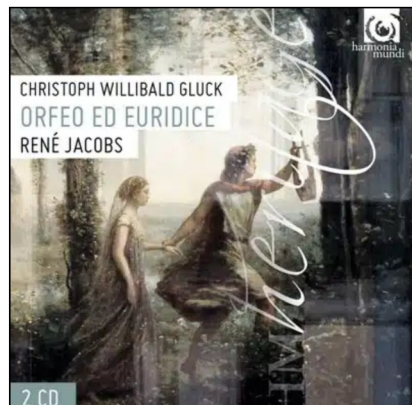
When our writer heard Orpheus' lament he likened it to a stab to the heart. This is what music and song can do. He was asked whether it brought any sense of consolation in his grief. He replied, after a moment or two's pause, that it was not so much consolation as corroboration.

I am inspired by his choice of word. It implies affirmation, validation, authentication maybe. It allows grief to be, in all its rawness, makes it real and a shared experience. It doesn't pretend to make it better.

In the same sort of way there is power in listening; allowing the other to verbalise their distress, not as a plea to be fixed, more a desire to have feelings recognised, acknowledged.

Julian Barnes has a way with words and expressions of emotion, enjoyed and valued by many readers. He is the most proud of his book 'Flaubert's Parrot', written in 1984. His very last publication, (so he says), entitled 'Departures', came out last month, a day after his 80th birthday.

Margaret Gandon



EVENTS AT THE CATHEDRAL

**Saturday 7 March
7.30pm**

The Music of Queen by Candlelight

Experience an unforgettable evening of Queen's greatest anthems, featuring a world-class cast of West End vocalists and epic live rock band. Sing along to timeless classics including Bohemian Rhapsody, It's a Kind of Magic, We Are The Champions, Who Wants to Live Forever and many more! The Show Must Go On! Grab your tickets now to this spectacular celebration of Queen's biggest hits, guaranteed to Rock You!



Saturday 21 March 7.30pm

Mendelssohn: Elijah

A favourite of choral music lovers around the world, this 1846 oratorio is bursting with Old Testament fire and brimstone, bringing the biblical story of prophet Elijah to life with large-scale musical forces and rousing operatic gusto. Performing with the 150 members of Worcester Festival Choral Society will be the Meridian Sinfonia and acclaimed soloists. Worcester Cathedral director of music, Samuel Hudson, conducts.



*For prices/more details, visit the
Cathedral website*





Top: Brian sits proudly by the new electric piano which was almost completely financed by donations/collections.

Bottom: Enjoying coffee after the Ash Wednesday service

SAT 28th March

?

7pm

?

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LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

ALL WELCOME

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RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 2026

Andy Gandon writes: this was last month, 8th February. Margaret and I were able to worship at St Anne's Bewdley, and the carefully crafted service felt too good not to be more widely shared.

The service included four short reflections which give us all plenty of food for thought..

SETTING THE SCENE

These last two years have been challenging for racial justice.

2024 saw riots and attacks on asylum seeker hotels following the murders of children in Southport. 2025 saw renewed unrest and the creation of 'flag world' as union flags and St George's crosses were hung from lamp posts and private homes. While these claimed to be, and in many cases no doubt were, a simple outpouring of patriotism, many ethnic minorities felt, and feel, intimidated. Our own diocese experienced violent activity in Dudley, and an ethnic minority family was forced from their home, that they were renting from the Church. A member of our congregation today is connected to another ethnic minority family whose children were frightened to leave the house and go outside.

Many clergy feel let down that the diocese said and did too little in response.

In this service we shall not consider the policy issues or the politics. In this service we shall rather try to enter into the minds of all who feel frightened and aggrieved on all sides. We shall try to enter the hopes and fears of those on both sides and pray for all who feel frightened. We will contemplate their longing for sanctuary and we will pray that it may be realised.

Meditation 1: THE REFUGEE JOURNEY

Why does someone leave their home country and seek to resettle elsewhere?

Why leave family, home, customs, friends and all things familiar to travel, wearily from place to place?

No one does it lightly.

For many, there is no choice: war or civil conflict has driven them out. The nastiest civil war the world has ever seen drags on in Sudan. It rarely makes our TV screens. Villages are set alight. Civilians are tortured, killed or starved. There are many other conflicts across the globe.

For others the reasons are more complex. Whole areas of Pakistan were destroyed last year by astonishing floods... likely caused by the changing climate. As sea levels rise we can expect yet more displacement of peoples.

Some belong to religious minorities who are persecuted. Christians in Iran, Alawites in Pakistan for example.

Gay people face punishments in many countries and a possible death penalty in 12 countries.

Whatever the reason, one day they have to get up and go...

What do they hope for? What do they long for?

They hope for what we all hope for... a job, a home, a stable family life, to follow their religion in peace... in a word: sanctuary.

What can they expect? Being ripped off by people-smugglers, danger from thieves along the route, endless form-filling, delays, years living on the borderline of survival. And possibly, just possibly, in the end, acceptance in a new country.

How many will find sanctuary?

Meditation 2: THE LEFT- BEHIND

Many people in the UK feel they have been left behind. Sadly many of them are young.

In former mining towns like Merthyr Tydfil, over a quarter of young people are unemployed. It is similar in coastal towns like Blackpool and former industrial areas of Glasgow.

Levels of health in these communities are poor. There is high incidence of childhood obesity. Supermarket shelves in these areas are full of cheap calories with little healthy food visible.

Having a place of your own to live, bring up a family and have a stable job seems like a pipe-dream. Will they find sanctuary? Right across the country, in all income groups, young people wonder how ever they can get on the housing ladder. Huge deposits are needed to access a mortgage. We are currently building fewer homes than before the pandemic. Unless



you have access to the bank of Mum and Dad, you are in limbo.

What stake do young people have in the future of our country? Is it any wonder that people look at the political class with scepticism and wonder who they are serving? Or that they wonder how £5 billion can be found each year to process and manage refugees and asylum seekers?

And they remember that when the coal mines were closed we were told this was the price of progress. But when the bankers broke the banks, they appeared to get away scot-free.

Is it any wonder that people look for new parties, new faces and new solutions. They are prepared to take huge risks for a vague hope that they might start to count.

But will they find sanctuary?

Meditation 3: THE DEMONSTRATOR

She is angry. She waves a placard. She is in a crowd



outside a hostel housing single male asylum seekers. She feels its presence makes her daughter unsafe. She feels the money could be better spent. She feels that politicians do not take her views seriously. She thinks back to the terrorist attack in Southport. She reads social media sites that many would label extremist.

What does she hope for and long for? She has a job, a home and a family. Yet she feels frightened and unsettled.

Will she ever be willing to offer sanctuary to refugees fleeing from wars and conflicts?

Will she find sanctuary herself? What would it take to bring her world and the world of the refugee together?

Can there be reconciliation?



BISHOP HUGH'S LENT MESSAGE 2026

In this year's Lent message, Bishop Hugh encourages us to consider using the 40 days to commit to a specific discipline which will help us to live life more fully with God and for God.



Being a Christian is a bit like that. We have disciplines too – not out on a training pitch, but in prayer, and in reading the bible and in worship and in service. And in case the word ‘discipline’

sounds a bit heavy, remember it's the same word as ‘disciple’ which just means ‘learner’, ‘student’ or perhaps best of all – ‘apprentice’.

Sportswomen and sportsmen, the kind of people who play at Sixways, the home of Worcester Warriors Rugby Club, put in hours and hours of practice, repeating the same drills over and over again. The same drop kick or forehand; the same penalty flick or free kick – practising and practising. And of course that takes discipline.

And they do all that disciplined training so that, when they go out on match day in front of the crowds, they haven't got to think about what to do – they just do it instinctively. All that discipline in training means the kick, or the swing or the flick, become part of who they are.

And the same is true of musicians, and of actors, and of anyone who has to practise a skill in order to get to the point where instinct takes over – where responding to the situation doesn't take deliberate thought – it just happens.

And the point of those disciplines is to help us learn how to live faithfully when we're out and about getting on with life. Like the sportsmen and women who practise here, we pray and read the bible and worship, so that when we're getting on with life – at work, with our families, in the community, we haven't got to think about what to do – we just get on with working for justice, acting compassionately, introducing people to Jesus and his love.

Lent is just about to start. The gift of 40 days when we are invited to attend to our spiritual disciplines; to notice where we're on track, and where we're not. Lent gives us the opportunity to be honest with ourselves and with God, about where we need to go back to the

training ground, back to the basics of what it is to follow Jesus – to be a disciple, and to commit to doing something about it.

So, maybe you need to get back to praying each day, or to start for the first time, or to pray with your children. Maybe your bible hasn't been opened for a while, or regular worship has slipped. Whatever it is, Lent is offered to you as a gift. 40 days to practise the presence of God, so that you can live the whole of life more closely with him.

And you haven't even got to do it

in the rain!

So, let me encourage you to consider – what one thing could you do this Lent - what one discipline could you commit to - that will help you live life more fully with God and for God?

God bless, and I hope you have a wonderful Lent.

[See Diocesan website for details of Lent appeal for 2026](#)



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