

## MESSAGE FROM FATHER CON FOR THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT

"Lent" is an old-English word for Spring. The season lasts for 40 days, the first of which is Ash Wednesday. Lent is founded upon the 40 days and nights Jesus spent in the wilderness, having been impelled there by the Holy Spirit directly after his Baptism.

In 2020 we lost the second half of Lent due to the first lockdown. We then proceeded to lose the whole of Holy Week and Easter. Most especially, we lost the Sacred Triduum (Holy Thursday evening – the Mass of the Lord's Supper; Good Friday – the 3pm Service of the Passion; the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night). "Triduum" defines these 3 days. It is a Latin singular word – in other words, these 3 great days are to be understood as one long Liturgy.

Now, in 2021, as we look towards Ash Wednesday (17<sup>th</sup> February), the prospects of a full Easter Liturgy look considerably brighter – even though we are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown.

The Holy Season of Lent surely has something of a "lockdown" feel to it, even in non-pandemic years. We are encouraged to lock down on certain features of everyday living – for example, giving up something and thereby feeling the pinch; watching less television ... whatever we choose to do!

Yet, Lent is not merely about giving something up. It is a great opportunity to boost our prayer life, to really read passages from Sacred Scripture – allowing the word of God more deeply into our daily lives, and to really enter our hearts and minds.

So, let us endeavour to use this lockdown to spend a good Lent spiritually. For example, let us seek to discover or develop the Prayer of Silence, which would have been such a feature for Jesus whilst in the wilderness. He is the Word of God – may we more closely engage with him via reading passages of Sacred Scripture. Then we will be ready for a 2021 Sacred Triduum – the first 3 days of April 2021.