



Lent: Reflection - Week One 2019

For use as an assembly / class reflection or for adaptation for meditation.

In Sunday's Gospel reading we heard about Jesus going into the desert for forty days and forty nights to fast and pray.

Lent is a time for refocusing on our relationship with God, a time when we follow Jesus' example by trying to make the effort to give something up, or to do something positive for this period of forty days and nights.

Our lives are so full all the time that to try to make some space can be difficult. But worth it all if it helps us to realise that life is about more than rushing about trying to fit in all the activity we can, being surrounded by noise and bustle all the time. Jesus was tempted by the devil to abandon his fast and to give in to the distractions on which the world places importance.

Life is not about success, fame, riches ...

Life is what we make it ... remembering to be grateful for all the good things in our lives – the love of family, having good friends, being able to do all things we are able to do, being surrounded by the beauty of a spring day, flowers, mountains – the song of birds singing ...
When did I last stop to listen to the birds?

This Lent let's make a real effort to be the best people we can be.

To be aware of the needs of the people around us ...

To be aware of the beauty that surrounds us ...

To be aware of God's presence with us and in us ...

And when we are tempted to forget these things to make time to stop, to pause and to give thanks.

Prayer:

God our Father, send your Holy Spirit upon us to deepen our faith during these days of Lent Help us to follow Jesus' example and to take time to become aware of what is really important in the way in which we live each day of our lives.

We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Lent: Reflection - Week Two 2019

The Gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Lent takes us up the mountain where the Transfiguration of Jesus took place. Peter, James and John witnessed Jesus in his glory together with Moses and Elijah and heard the voice of God the Father saying 'This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to Him'.

This year, on the second Sunday of Lent, we celebrated the Feast of St. Patrick. The alternative Gospel read at Masses celebrating our national feast, told us of another great miracle. In spite of a night of fishing which had resulted in no catch at all, Jesus enabled the fishermen *'to catch so many fish that their nets were beginning to break'* (Luke 5: 6). They were afraid, but Jesus told them *"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people"*. (Luke 5:10)

St. Patrick followed in the footsteps of the apostles, spreading the Good News of the Gospel, telling of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; teaching the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

During this week of Lent, like St. Patrick who is reputed to have spent forty days and nights in prayer and fasting on Croagh Patrick, we pray for the strength to continue our journey towards Easter, deepening our own faith and following in the footsteps of our ancestors, whose faith was passed down from generation to generation.

We pray:

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Amen.





Lent: Reflection - Week Three 2019

In Sunday's Gospel reading we heard the parable of the fig tree. The tree had not produced fruit in three years and the owner of the vineyard wanted it to be cut down. However, the man who tended the vineyard asked that he be allowed to leave it for one more year, to care for it and give it one more chance to bear fruit.

God is like the man who tended the tree. He is a God of love and of patience; no matter how we fail in life he never gives up on us and is always willing to offer us another chance. When we make mistakes he is always there loving us, forgiving us and giving us yet another chance to be start again.

The fig tree needed to be watered and nurtured.

Lent offers us an opportunity to nurture and strengthen our faith

We pray that we may be strong in continuing with our Lenten resolutions.

If we have given up on them, or broken them, that we will have the courage to start again.

May the fruit of this Lent be a deeper faith, and a real commitment to following the teachings of Jesus by loving and caring for those we encounter each day.





Lent: Reflection - Week Four 2019

We are now in the fourth week of our journey through Lent.
The Gospel reading on Sunday was the story of the Prodigal Son .

(If using this as a class reflection read Luke: 13:1-9 with the class).

A father had two sons. The younger son demanded his share of his inheritance and left home. He squandered all his money; lived through a famine; he eventually found himself feeding pigs; he was starving and would have willingly eaten the husks he was feeding to the pigs. He realized his father's servants had more to eat than they needed and thought that, perhaps, if he went back home and begged for forgiveness, his father might give him a job as a servant.

His father was ecstatic to see his son returning home. There was no question but that he forgave him. He joyfully welcomed him home with open arms and celebrated that the child he had lost was home again.

The older brother was not impressed. He complained that he had been the dutiful son who had stayed at home and done everything he should for his father. His father told him not to be jealous – after all, everything the father had would be his one day. But this was not a question of justice or of duty ... but of love.

This is a story about unconditional love.

A story about forgiveness; a story of repentance, renewal and relationship.

Sometimes we make bad decisions, but God's love never diminishes and when we turn back to him he is there waiting to welcome us with open arms.

During this week of Lent let us pray for awareness of the times we have failed to choose to do what is right; for the grace to admit our fault, to make reparation for any harm we may have caused, and for the courage to ask for forgiveness from God and from those we have hurt. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(You may find **'The Prodigal Son's Older Brother'** useful for prompting discussion on this parable with senior cycle students. See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3ZzHnU4RCI>)

