

Ash Wednesday 2018

Aims and Objectives

- To allow young people to enter into spirit of Lent in a profound and relevant way
- To fulfil the request from the Church to mark the beginning of the Lenten Season
- To fully explain the relevance of Lent within a secular culture.

This reflection, that can be used in an assembly format, should be 15 minutes long. If it is used as part of an Ash Wednesday Service please allow more time. This reflection has an accompanying PowerPoint. We have indicated when the PowerPoint slides need to be moved on in the notes below.

(Title slide)

Leader : We begin our time together in the great sign of our faith

(all to join in)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

Leader: Lent is a time of preparation. It is a time of reflection, where we as Catholic Christians can think about what that title really means.

We are given a 40 day retreat, a momentary time of stillness to look at our lives and re-evaluate. (Slide 2) **Lent is spring cleaning for the soul.** It is during this time when we attempt to give something up, we refuse ourselves of a luxury and that is not easy. And yet, when Ash Wednesday comes around how often is it that the focus seems to be on what that 'luxury' we have forsaken is. We often look only at the surface of ourselves, on the difficulty it will be for us to not eat cake for 40 days, forgetting in the meantime the true nature of lent. We forget why Jesus came down from Heaven to us here on earth. We forget about **what** happened on Good Friday and **why**.

Let us hear now, from the Gospel of Matthew, about the time when Jesus called Matthew the Tax Collector to be His disciple.



Reader: (Slide 3) A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?"

When Jesus heard this, he said, "**Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do.**" Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices. 'For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.'"

Leader: In Jesus' words, He came for the sick; not the healthy. He came for us. In Lent we recognise the areas in our life that are sick, we recognise the barriers that stop us from connecting to God. How can we beat this sickness, how do we get better? We do what Jesus tells us and meet Him. Where can we meet Him? (Slide 4) We can meet him in Scripture, in Prayer, in other people and importantly through the Sacraments – especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

(Quiet instrumental music to be played from here)

Let us reflect on this time of Lent. This opportunity for penance, reconciliation, fasting and almsgiving

We are going to see a selection of twelve images, each connected to Lent.

Let us open our hearts during this time and allow Christ to heal us.

(slowly click through the Twelve images. Leave at least 10 seconds for each)

Intercessions

Reader 1: For when we are sick of feeling alone, Lord help us to remember You are always with us. Let us always know Your comfort and peace.

Lord in Your mercy

ALL: Hear our prayer



Reader 2: For when we are sick of being selfish, Lord change our hearts so they are more like Your Sacred Heart. Guide us to always think of other people first, rather than ourselves. Inspire us to be counter cultural in loving our neighbour, and our enemies.

Lord in Your mercy

ALL: Hear our prayer

Reader 3: For when we are sick of turning away from God, Lord lead us back to You. Fill us with a sense of Your glory and majesty so we can always have our eyes fixed on You.

Lord in Your mercy

ALL: Hear our prayer

Reader 4: For when we are sick of being afraid, Lord send us Your strength. Give us courage to stand up for what is right, particularly for the rights of those who are most vulnerable, the sick, the poor, the unborn and elderly.

Lord in Your mercy

ALL: Hear our prayer

Reader 5: We lift up all of our prayers to our Mother Mary, to pray for us as we say

ALL: Hail Mary...

Leader: Father, our source of life, You know our weakness. May we reach out with joy to grasp your hand and to walk more readily in your ways. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Sign of the Cross.

