



Week 1



Ash Wednesday – the first day of Lent – fell this year during our mid-term break.

Lent is an old word that means Spring ... and traditionally, as the sun gets stronger and the days get longer, we think of 'spring cleaning' our homes after the long dark winter.

For Christians Lent is a time during which we take time out of our busy, noisy lives to prepare for Holy Week and Easter – the high point of the Church's year. It is a time for 'spring-cleaning' our hearts!

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of this time of penance – a time when we try to take stock of our lives; to recognise that we are not perfect, that there is always room for improvement and to make an effort to live as better people.

We will reflect on this as we remember that we are now in the first full week of Lent.

Let us just take a moment to be still and quiet. *(Pause)*

In last Sunday's Gospel we heard that Jesus went out into the wilderness and remained there for forty days. If you were to think of leaving behind all the busyness of your life – even for a day or two – what would you have to let go of? What would you have to cancel? How would you cope without your mobile phone? Would you find it hard to be alone for even a day? Would you find it hard to be silent for a day?

Realistically we cannot just walk away from our lives. However, we can decide to do something that makes us think more deeply about our lives and that might help us to be better people.

What can you do for this week? Make a resolution to do something positive

- Switch off or put away your mobile phone for a little while each day this week and be present to your friends or family.
- Give up the bag of crisps or the chocolate or the sugary drink ... and put the money you would have spent on that into your Trócaire box.
- Take a few minutes of quiet time in the morning or evening ... try to listen to what it is that God is asking of you today ... what is in your heart? ...
- Resolve to do something today for someone else.

We pray: Lord, we ask you to give us the strength this Lent to genuinely think about the deeper things in our lives, to make time to grow spiritually and to live each day being more aware of the people around us and how we are with them in each moment. Amen.



Week 2



During the second week of Lent we are reminded that:

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Luke 6:36-38

Imagine a world in which no one judges or condemns others; a world full of forgiveness. A world in which everyone cares for the needs of others and in which no one goes hungry.

This was the world envisioned by Jesus when he spoke of the Kingdom of God.

Pause for a moment and consider:

Can I think of a time when I have been unkind to someone else?

Can I think of a time when I have been too angry to forgive someone?

Now:

Think of a time someone has been kind to me.

Think of a time when someone has forgiven me.

How did I feel?

Now: Resolve to be kinder this week.

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Luke 6:31

We pray: Lord, we ask you to give us the strength this Lent to genuinely think about the deeper things in our lives, to make time to grow spiritually and to live each day being more aware of the people around us, particularly the members of our families, and how we are with them in each moment. Amen.