# Saint Mary's Newsletter: February

Vicar: David Smithson 021 985530 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: John Heaton 07 8243996



## SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY



Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>:

10am Holy Communion Service

Refreshments: T Smithson Readings: T Smithson Intercessions: T Smithson

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>:

10am Holy Communion Service

Refreshments: S Riddell Readings: S Riddell Intercessions: S Riddell

## Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>:

7:30pm Ash Weds Service

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>:

10am Holy Communion service – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of LENT

Refreshments: Karen Boyer Readings: Karen Boyer Intercessions: Karen Boyer





Summer Fair: Roll up roll up! Our parish fair commences Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. Be there at 8am to set up. Bring baking, preserves, books, plants, puzzles



**Refreshment Roster:** lease see the roster on the table near the church entrance, and fill in the spaces / dates that you can provide after service morning tea. The amount of people helping out on this roster is growing smaller, so we would really appreciate it if you would consider assisting if you are not already – even once every couple of months or so would help. Being on the Refreshment roster does not mean you need to be on the readings or intercession part if you are not comfortable with that <sup>(2)</sup>

**Lent:** Weds 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb marks the beginning of Lent.

#### What does the bible say about war?

Many people make the mistake of reading what the Bible says in Exodus 20:13, "You shall not kill," and then seeking to apply this command to war. However, the Hebrew word literally means "the intentional, premeditated killing of another person with malice; murder." God often ordered the Israelites to go to war with other nations (1 Samuel 15:3; Joshua 4:13). God ordered the death penalty for numerous crimes (Exodus 21:12, 15; 22:19; Leviticus 20:11). So, God is not against killing in all circumstances, but only murder. War is never a good thing, but sometimes it is a necessary thing. In a world filled with sinful people (Romans 3:10-18), war is inevitable. Sometimes the only way to keep sinful people from doing great harm to the innocent is by going to war.

In the Old Testament, God ordered the Israelites to "take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites" (Numbers 31:2). Deuteronomy 20:16-17 declares, "However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them...as the LORD your God has commanded you." Also, 1 Samuel 15:18 says, "Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out." Obviously God is not against all war. Jesus is always in perfect agreement with the Father (John 10:30), so we cannot argue that war was only God's will in the Old Testament. God does not change (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17).

Jesus' second coming will be exceedingly violent. Revelation 19:11-21 describes the ultimate war with Christ, the conquering commander who judges and makes war "with justice" (v. 11). It's going to be bloody (v. 13) and gory. The birds will eat the flesh of all those who oppose Him (v. 17-18). He has no compassion upon His enemies, whom He will conquer completely and consign to a "fiery lake of burning sulphur" (v. 20).

It is an error to say that God never supports a war. Jesus is not a pacifist. In a world filled with evil people, sometimes war is necessary to prevent even greater evil. If Hitler had not been defeated by World War II, how many more millions would have been killed? If the American Civil War had not been fought, how much longer would African-Americans have had to suffer as slaves?

War is a terrible thing. Some wars are more "just" than others, but war is always the result of sin (Romans 3:10-18). At the same time, Ecclesiastes 3:8 declares, "There is...a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace." In a world filled with sin, hatred, and evil (Romans 3:10-18), war is inevitable.

Christians should not desire war. The most important thing we can be doing in a time of war is to be praying for godly wisdom for our leaders, praying for discernment if it is a just war or not (to see through propaganda) praying for the safety of our military, praying for quick resolution to conflicts, and praying for a minimum of casualties among civilians on both sides (Philippians 4:6-7).





Lent is a period of fasting, moderation, and selfdenial traditionally observed by Anglicans and Catholics. It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter Sunday. The length of the Lenten fast was established in the 4th century as 46 days (40 days, not counting Sundays). During Lent, participants eat sparingly or give up a particular food or habit. It's not uncommon for people to give up smoking during Lent, or to swear off watching television or eating candy or telling lies. It's six weeks of self-discipline.

Lent began as a way for us to remind ourselves of the value of repentance. The austerity of the Lenten season was seen as similar to how people in the Old Testament fasted and repented in sackcloth and ashes (Esther 4:1-3; Jeremiah 6:26; Daniel 9:3).

However, over the centuries Lenten observances have developed a much more "sacramental" value. Many Catholics believe that giving something up for Lent is a way to attain God's blessing. But the Bible teaches that grace cannot be earned; grace is "the gift of righteousness" (Romans 5:17). Also, Jesus taught that fasting should be done discreetly: "When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen" (Matthew 6:16-18). Jesus' command to "wash your face" seems to conflict with the practice of rubbing ashes on one's face on Ash Wednesday.

Fasting can be a good thing, and God is pleased when we repent of sinful habits. There's absolutely nothing wrong with setting aside some time to focus on Jesus' death and resurrection. However, repenting of sin is something we should be doing every day of the year, not just for the 46 days of Lent.

If a Christian wishes to observe Lent, they are free to do so. The key is to focus on repenting of sin and consecrating oneself to God. Lent should not be a time of boasting of one's sacrifice or trying to earn God's favour or increasing His love. God's love for us could not be any greater than it already is.

#### What is the meaning of Lent?