

# Lent and Easter

## Lenten reflections

### AIM

Three reflections for Lent are provided. One for the beginning, middle and end of that period. You may want to use these in your own prayer time, in a small group or in public worship.

### INTRODUCTION

Lent is a time set aside for reflection; of coming to terms with darker aspects of life, with life in deserts and dry places; painful, often cruel places, our own and other people's. Lent properly leads us to Holy Week and Good Friday and Easter. Coming to terms with the darkness around us and in us - not holding it all too lightly nor stressing it too heavily - throws Easter into bright and joyful relief.

But if we try to reach Easter without the desert, or Gethsemane, or Maundy Thursday or Good Friday then we cheapen it and it becomes simply another shopping opportunity for chocolate makers or a superficial party, fun - but brassy and denuded of its deeper meaning.

Taken altogether this season reaches to the depths of us, heals us, grows us, fills us with love, and in love challenges us to greater wholeness and involvement with the pain and the joy of the world around us.

In Lent we celebrate God's provision, even in the midst of emptiness, for even should we be in despair and unable to discern God, God is still with us, though hidden by our dark clouds.

And so we wait on the Lord.

### 1. LENTEN THOUGHTS

A dismal orgy of Lenten thoughts  
crash depressingly:  
of the wilderness of lost humanity;  
of terrorist trading freedom for freedom's sake;  
lost souls believing in a dark light,  
naming it religion, writ large  
in pointless sacrifice;  
national superiority proclaimed and protected  
under a cloak of belief.....  
and God proclaimed as the one who  
impels the carnage  
of hatred, fear, bigotry and lust,  
wrought deep within the human psyche  
spilling over into children raped  
and brutalised innocence,  
or the gentler pursuits  
of persuading children into parental prejudice,  
toughened for their own sake  
to survive in a cruel and killing world:  
of simplistic, cultic answers  
to half understood problems,  
and people wrangled from the dark valley  
by quick prayers and gentle laying on of hands,  
superficially healed by well meaning leaders,

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repelled by their own  
buried needs and denied powerful urges;  
of quick religious answers to intractable problems,  
leading to rejection of those who cannot conform.

And then some sun breaks through the clouds,  
illuminating the misty sea;  
and thoughts of the One Self Sacrifice,  
not yet fully risen, but on the way;  
of a time when the German wall crumbled  
and Velvet ushered in  
a deathless revolution of freedom,  
and the masculine Chimp-gene of cynical destruction  
was overcome by the female Biloba,  
compassionate, cooperating  
to outface the strutting male;  
of a coming time of completion  
when resurrection is made full  
and he returns,  
suddenly, quickly,  
after a thousand years of preparation,  
surprisingly,  
to renew the walls of security;  
for all to grow to infinity  
in his beneficent gaze.

## 2. TRANSFIGURATION

Not by accident  
were they drawn to the hill of glory,

Moses and the disciples after him,  
to test and try the place  
where this world wears thin  
and eternity makes her presence felt.

Spirit calling to spirit  
yearning for fullness and expression,  
melded, with no obscuring,  
overshadowed, with no destruction,  
love flowing and completing,  
gentle, unobtrusive,  
insistent, compelling.

We walk in their bright shadow  
unable to enter except for  
the great sacrifice of love  
who draws us into himself  
to bring forth life  
in transcendent being.

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### 3. EASTER SUNDAY ALREADY?

Lord, I haven't quite made the journey  
from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday.

Something of that painful time  
still hangs around in me.....

Oh, it was good enough,  
to praise and worship and celebrate  
in church this morning,  
but still I am not settled, nor yet quite joyful enough  
to declare it Easter.

Perhaps my sisters and brothers in you  
would call me pretentious and faithless  
if I shared how I truly felt  
because the world hasn't changed very much, really,  
not in as much as two thousand years.

If I wasn't me, I would have had enough of me -  
so precious.

Is my lack of Easter joy  
because the world still suffers  
while in the West we deny the reality  
of our own oppression,  
even while our life style  
oppresses those upon whom it relies?

Or is it simply because  
my guts are hurting again?

### EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

### THE NEXT STEP

The text below is an example of the next step. Write your own based on this example.

If you want more starters please revisit the menu. If you want to do onto a main course 'Remembering him' is a Bible study that includes some remembering activities. For Desert try Kennings and Cookies. If you want to know more about Remembering the Bible see the document in the Training section of the website. There are other main course Bible studies available.

### Acknowledgements

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Any other enquires please to [admin@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:admin@vision4life.org.uk)

### HOW TO FEEDBACK TO VISION4LIFE?

If you wish to offer any feedback – brickbats and bouquets are equally welcome! – you can do so in various ways.

You can email the Vision4Life steering group about general or website V4L issues via the website or at [admin@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:admin@vision4life.org.uk)

If you have comments and particularly contributions to the prayer year, you can email the V4L prayer year coordinator via [prayer@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:prayer@vision4life.org.uk)

If you want to make contributions or ask questions about other V4L years you can email:

Year 3 – Transformed for Evangelism: [evangelism@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:evangelism@vision4life.org.uk)