

We, by your great love, O Lord, are free to enter your house; in reverence we bow down towards your holy temple.

In the sanctity of the most sacred place we bow down before the living God. We approach with reverence his burning presence, to be touched by the fire of his holiness.

Let us fan the flames of our love for God; fan into flame his gift of grace.

May we be transformed in the presence of God; made holy and ready for service. Amen

Rejoicing

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. *Psalms 100:1-2, 4-5*

We trust in your unfailing love; our hearts rejoice in your salvation.

We will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to us.

How can we not sing your praise with heart and soul and proclaim your name throughout the world?

**God of creation,
Awesome in power,
Sustainer,
Provider,
Saviour,
Father of all,
there is none like you!**

How can we not declare your glory through all that we are, and proclaim your name throughout this world?

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Final Blessing

May we be cleansed and refreshed by God's life-giving Word as we journey through Lent to draw closer to Christ. Amen

PRAYER LEAFLET FOR LENT.

Greetings my dear friends,

Ash Wednesday begins our time of reflection before the glorious celebration of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Day.

What a day for reflection in the wake of the bushfires which heralded in summer!

Smoke and the ash that remains after fire have, from the beginning of time, symbolised grief and pain, the breaking of hearts, the rising of prayer.

A physical symbol often speaks more than words. The blackness and fragility of ash reminds me of that awful feeling of being crushed and brought to virtually nothing; a feeling that may be brought on by family breakdown for which no one person is responsible. It is a just a tragedy.

Remember the scenes of black and red, of darkness at noonday as our dear country was overcome by what Colin Thiele called the February dragon. The famous children's author of *Storm Boy* also wrote about the common occurrence of bushfires in *February Dragon*. As with all aspects of our God-created life, fire has both the power of good and evil.

Our grief can spin on to vindictiveness and revenge where Christ would have us forgive and forgive and love that which does us harm or wrong.

In the desert of our unresolved burning may our Lenten struggle be to work at taming, befriending the dragon within which wants to roar and breathe fire on our persecutors.

There are many women saints whose legends depict them defeating dragons. Many are locked in towers by thwarted lover or father wanting to sell them off to the lovers. Pictures tell a thousand words St Martha is depicted in art as a shepherdess trailing her subdued dragon on a lead. There's no need to plunge in the sword like St George. Befriend your dark desires. Remember Justice is an attribute of God and relates to Love and Righteousness. Beware the common use of Justice that is disguised as Revenge/Vengeance.

This leaflet is accompanied by some psalms written for Lent 2020 from Mothers' Union UK. You may use as prayer with this introduction or during the Forty Days.

Reflection

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

Psalm 139:1-3

God, we come with hesitant steps and uncertain motives
to sweep out the corners where sin has accumulated,
and uncover the ways we have strayed from your truth.

Expose the empty and barren places

where we don't allow you to enter.

Reveal our half-hearted struggles where we have been indifferent
to the suffering of others.

Nurture the faint stirrings of new life, where your spirit has begun to
grow.

Let your healing light transform us into the image of your Son.
For you alone can bring new life and make us whole.

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Repentance

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalm 51:1-2

In this season of Lent, we embrace with gladness the rites
of repentance and turn with purpose from our selfish ways
that regeneration may be seen in our lives.

Lord, forgive our selfish ways and cleanse us from sin:

May your righteousness grow in us.

We marvel at the grace of God who uses our penitence to bring
renewal: to create joy from shame, life from decay,
fruit out of barrenness, hope from despair.

Lord, forgive our sinful ways and cleanse us from sin:

May your grace dwell in us. Amen

Refreshment

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land where there is no water. *Psalm 63:1*

As the deer pants for streams of water, so our souls thirst for you, our life-giving God.

Loving Lord, in this season of Lent we draw near
to drink deeply of your provision and be refreshed by your water of
life.

Christ our Saviour, we approach with worship and wonder
at the spiritual thirst you endured to give us streams of eternal
blessing,

We will drink deeply from your river that our lives may be refreshed.

We will overflow with your life, that others may be blessed.

With thankful hearts we worship you. Amen

Restoration

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Psalm 23; 1-3

God, our good shepherd, who gives his life for his sheep, we are your people, the flock in your care.

With God as our shepherd the way ahead holds no fear.

We approach our future with faith and trust.

Our God will hear our voice when we whisper our prayers.

He will meet our needs from the riches of his grace.

We will take our rest in the pastures of his love.

Our souls will be restored by the waters of his peace. Amen

Reverence

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Psalm 27:4