

# St Mary's Parish Church Whitegate



LETTER FROM THE VICARAGE - March 2010

## COOKING IN LENT

For those of us who are able to prepare our own meals, Lent can be a wonderful time to bring together our meal preparation and our faith. Food is so rich in symbolism, because it involves preparation, each step along the way can be open to meaning, and so it can be part of our Lenten prayer and ritual.

Each of the Fridays in Lent are days when Christians abstain from meat. This is because our Lord died on Good Friday and it is intended for us each week to deepen our faith experience. Of course some of us can't afford to eat meat every day, so abstaining on a day each week reminds us also of them. Some of us are vegetarians and don't eat meat in our diet at all anyway. Others might enjoy fish or seafood. For us all, not eating meat on a Friday, for whatever reason, allows us to have some taste of a faith experience, that places us together with our brothers and sisters who have less than we do from around the whole world at home and abroad. Our intention then if we do this together and desire to do so, is that together we might prayerfully have this solidarity with the truly hungry and poor of the earth and so deepen our devotion to our Lord Jesus who truly loved them.

Let us remember that we are keeping Friday special in Lent because this is that day when our Lord gave himself for us – selflessly and completely. This is the day that commemorates the Friday that we as Christians call 'Good Friday'. This remembrance is not meant to be sad or necessarily gloomy, but they are days when we are touched deeply. We remember on Good Friday that we are incredibly loved and we have been saved from the victory of sin and death that might have had over our lives. These are days to look upon the cross and remember and feel gratitude in our hearts, but also to feel and know freedom – freedom from our sin and death, and freed to love and to give of ourselves with generosity. The Fridays in Lent are days of spiritual exercise.

You might then ask, 'but what shall we eat' well you might stick to the tradition of eating fish or one of the simplest meals of Rice and Beans that the poor would eat. This places us in a position of solidarity and eating that which is healthy and nourishing. Praying its preparation and eating it and feeling honoured to have something to eat and to share with brothers and sisters across the world in so many countries. Will you share with them in the weeks ahead of a very blessed Lent.

Yours sincerely in Christ

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Parish priest