

# Message for Lent

## From Archbishop Leo Cushley

My dear friends,

Ash Wednesday is this week and marks the beginning of Lent. It is a day of fasting and abstinence as we head into six weeks of spiritual preparation for Easter Sunday. I want to offer three things we can do in Lent.

**Get your Ashes.** Make every effort to get your ashes on Ash Wednesday and embrace this day of prayer and fasting. The ashes signify repentance and death. When the priest places the ashes on your forehead he says: *“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”*. Or he will say: *“Repent and believe the Gospel”*. So, it is a chance to come before God in humility and to say sorry for our sins.

**Prioritise prayer.** Pope Francis has suspended his busy schedule for the first week of Lent to dedicate himself to private, prayerful spiritual exercises. He is putting prayer first, and we can follow that example. Whether that means getting up a little earlier to spend time with God, or switching off the TV or radio, let us prioritise prayer each day in Lent.

**Make sacrifices.** Often we resolve to ‘give up’ something in Lent, such as chocolate, alcohol, caffeine. Done in the right spirit, with an intention to get closer to God, this is a good thing. Let us also make sacrifices for others, to help them, especially when it may be inconvenient to ourselves. That way we can imitate Jesus who sacrificed his life for us all. Please also read the Holy Father’s message for Lent at [bit.ly/popelent24](http://bit.ly/popelent24).

God bless you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the letters 'LW' in a cursive style.

✦ Leo Cushley