

March 2020

March is the first month of what the weather forecasters now tend to call 'meteorological spring' and, as the month progresses, we should see the signs of the new season budding all around us. Winter is over. In terms of the Church calendar, March is entirely a Lenten month this year, appropriately enough as the word 'Lent' itself derives from the Old English word for spring – that time of year when the hours of daylight are most visibly lengthening.

For the Christian Church everything builds up to our celebration of Easter - it's the great feast of the Resurrection around which our whole faith hinges. Lent is the time when we prepare ourselves - our hearts, minds, souls and bodies - for that most significant event in the religious year. It's the time when we try that much harder to grow closer to Christ and the values of his Gospel.

People tend to get rather hung up about Lent being exclusively a time of self-denial, but we need to remember that giving things up, going without, living more simply, however we are going to phrase it, is always a means to an end and not an end in itself.

The qualities we need to approach Lent - to prepare for Lent - are the qualities of faith, confidence, discipline, and the *right kind* of humility to be able to be with the Lord in prayer and worship, and to take a look at our relationships with others and to be able to learn from the example of Jesus himself. It's meant to be a time of growth and new beginnings and, above all else, a time for changing the direction of our lives and pointing them more in the direction of God and the practical service of those in need.

Fr Michael

Fr Mark Zorab

Due to recent developments in the Church in Wales, and following the installation of the new Bishop of Monmouth, Fr Mark has decided to step back from active ministry while he discerns his future.

I fully understand the reasons behind his decision, and would like to take the opportunity to thank Mark for his many years of tireless service in these parishes as a valued colleague and close friend. I'm sure you will all wish to join me both in thanking him for everything he has done in the service of the Gospel in our parishes and also in assuring him of our continuing prayers, support and friendship.