

Today is the First Sunday of Lent (Year B).

Liturgy during Lent:

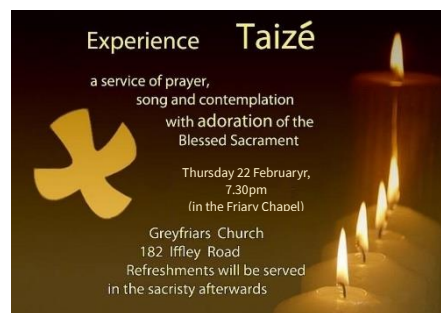
Don't forget that during Lent we do not say or sing the *Gloria* at Sunday Masses. The *Alleluia* is also not sung or said during the Lenten liturgies. Purple is the colour of the season, and the altar and sanctuary should not be decorated with flowers. This serves to emphasize the penitential character of the Lenten season.

This week:

Thursday 22 February: The Chair of Peter. Feast.

Originating as a feast for Peter's leadership in Antioch, distinct from the celebration of his leadership in Rome, this feast uses the image of the chair as the seat of authority. Its universal celebration on Thursday, interrupting the seasonal texts of Lent, celebrates the unity of our Church.

Also on Thursday 22 February: Taizé Prayer



On the last Thursday of each month you are invited to attend a Taizé prayer service at 7.30pm in the Chapel. Taizé-style worship centres on singing, prayer, and readings from Scripture. 'The exchange with God becomes real for us in prayer; by his Holy Spirit God comes to dwell with us. By his Word and by the Sacraments, Christ gives himself to us. In return, we can surrender everything to him.'

Friday 23 February: St Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr

St Polycarp (69–155) was converted by St John the Evangelist. He was later ordained Bishop of Smyrna (in present-day Turkey). He was about eighty-six when the Roman proconsul urged him to renounce Christ and save his life. He replied, "For eighty-six years I have served him and he has never wronged me. How can I renounce the King who has saved me?" He was martyred and his body burned.

Also Friday 23 February: Holy Rosary at 7pm

Every Friday evening at 7pm the Holy Rosary is recited in the church. All are welcome.

Every Friday during Lent at 7.30pm: Stations of the Cross

The Mystery of the Cross is the key to the world's salvation. So, as we follow Jesus along the fourteen 'stations' of the Way of the Cross, we should expect to encounter the multiple mysteries of the one Mystery of the Cross that transforms Christian living.

Friday 23 February is also the CAFOD Lent Fast Day

Malnutrition is still killing almost three million children a year. Your fasting, prayers and donations will ensure more of God's children have enough good food to eat.

And this Lent, **your donation will make double the difference**. For every pound you donate to CAFOD, the UK Government will also donate a pound, up to a total of £5 million, meaning twice the number of lives can be transformed. Twice the number of children can have the opportunity to grow up healthy and strong.

Please collect your Fast Day envelope from church this week and give generously. (In light of recent news reports you may wish to know CAFOD has a statement about safeguarding vulnerable communities on <https://cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news>.)

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Looking ahead:

Next Sunday: Confirmation Programme for the Young Begins

This programme will start on Sunday 25 February at 10am in the church. For this programme the candidates need to have finished primary school and be entering, or already in, secondary school.

Starting Soon

The **Adult Confirmation Programme** will start on *Wednesday 28 February*. It is for those aged 16 and older who have been baptized Catholic but have not received the sacrament of Confirmation. They are invited to participate in a preparation programme at 7pm in the Friary (182 Iffley Road).

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Brothers & Sisters: Have a Good Lent!

A good Lent can really make you miserable. You give up things you enjoy. You do without excesses. You practise charity to people you'd rather ignore. You cut back on sweets or caffeine or alcohol. Or meat. Or dairy. You break your routine and the results are usually the same. Within 48 hours after Lent begins, you get grumpy.

But a good Lent can really make you happy. You find out what your cravings are. You strongly put them aside because your craving for God is deeper. God responds to your search and rewards you with a closer union. You end the season more comfortable at prayer, more giving to others, less attached to material things.

It's a great season, but don't enter it half-heartedly. Be courageous!

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

It's not hard to feel intimidated when we think of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). We may worry that God won't really forgive us. It can be easy to forget that Confession is a sacrament of healing as well as a sacrament of forgiveness. In other words, Confession has the power to change us, not just pardon us.

Keep this promise of healing in mind as you prepare for Confession this Lent.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is celebrated on Saturdays (11.30am-12 noon, and 5.30pm-6.25pm) in the church.

Alternatively, see a priest after Mass.