

THE 1st SUNDAY OF LENT – 22nd February 2026

Lenten Message from Bishop Toal

A desire for better weather and longer days is shared by most of us. Someone told me recently he is looking forward to getting back out into his garden, with renewed enthusiasm for tidying up the ground after the winter months, turning over the soil, and planting new bulbs in the expectation of new growth and beautiful flowers through the summer months. It is an expectation fulfilled each year as the natural world comes to life again each spring and begins to produce its fruits, frequently enhanced by the hands and skill of the dedicated gardener.

Soon we will enter the Season of Lent and it will be good to approach it like the enthusiastic gardener, eager to attend to our spiritual lives by following the traditional Lenten discipline of Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. We recognise the need for a renewed effort in tidying up our lives, getting rid of all wrong-doing and slackness in our actions and attitudes; preparing the ground of our souls for new growth and good fruit; opening our minds and hearts anew to God's Word and the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Yes Lent is the Season for re-awakening and attentiveness to the Lord, giving time to prayer, participating in the sacramental and devotional life of the Church, and in sharing generously our time and wealth with those in need. The following words from the Prophet Isaiah set the Lenten tone and expectation:

"For as the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bud and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the earth, so shall my word be; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

May this be a blessed and fruitful Lent for us all.

+Joseph Toal

