

Monthly Letter, March 2021
From the Bishop of Ramsbury, Andrew Rumsey



Lent has arrived, and a feeling that the fields are ready to unfurl again. We have been wintering in confinement and uncertainty, weary of the indoors and all too familiar with these four walls. But the barn doors of daylight are slowly being hauled open and it is a relief to be approaching the spring once more, even if it reminds us how long we have been living with this extraordinary new life.

The approach to Lent called attention to our longings and desires – from Simeon and Anna at Candlemas, patiently waiting for the consolation of their people, to the wilderness temptations of Christ. Thirty years on, he embarks upon his ministry with acute awareness of all that might draw him away, winning the battle to assert that his first and only true appetite is for God, his Father. This is why some of us fast, of course: not to be slimmer or more successfully devout, but to reorder our priorities and insist upon seeking first the kingdom of heaven.

It is most encouraging – and often most effective – to do this in the little things. To address the countless small choices we make each day, almost without thinking. What we decide to buy, how we drive, or speak to others on the phone; remembering to turn, however briefly, to Christ before the difficult encounter. To adapt an old maxim, if we offer the minutes to God, the hours will look after themselves.

And before our own efforts, of course, we are reminded that the Lord goes before us, daily supplying our needs. Much has been taken away in recent months: may the onset of spring bring a renewal of your strength and hope, by the grace and mercy of God.

With the assurance of my prayers,

+Andrew