

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 05. February 2, 2020. Epiphany 4

Feast of the Presentation Candlemas

The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, or Candlemas, traditionally marks the end of the Christmas/Epiphany Season. According to our Prayer Book Calendar, which we inherited from the Episcopal Church in the US, Epiphany continues until the Sunday before Lent, but traditionally, and in many Anglican provinces still, the next three Sundays form an interim period during which our attention is turned from the joy and sparkle of Christmas and Epiphany, to what lies ahead; Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

The notion of preparing for Lent may seem odd, since Lent itself is often described as a preparation for Easter. However, Lent has its own integrity; like Advent, it is a time to step off the cycle of seasons and fix our attention to the reality in which we are called to live and witness, to reflect on where we stand in relation to it, both as individuals and as a community. We need to think seriously about how we are going to approach it in order to take advantage of the opportunities for spiritual growth that it offers.

And we need Lent this year of Our Lord 2020; it's promising to be a more than 'interesting' one. Already a series of events have reminded us of our fragility, that we are indeed dust, and to dust we shall return. We've had the apocalyptic scenes from the Australian fires, the devastation wrought by the Taal eruption, and now a nasty virus that has the whole world on edge. Add to that the political turmoil and economic jitters, all of this magnified to a previously unimaginable degree by a vicious social media, and there is a lot to be serious and sober about.

But serious and sober does not mean somber or despairing. Lent and Holy Week, which we are all called to live through in our own lives from time to time, are not the last word, after all. Just remember, the traditional names for the next three Sundays leading up to Ash Wednesday are, Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima, which mean respectively 70th, 60th and 50th – they are not counting down the days to Lent – they're counting down the days till the Resurrection. That's where all this is headed, and we'll be reminded about that in this morning's liturgy.