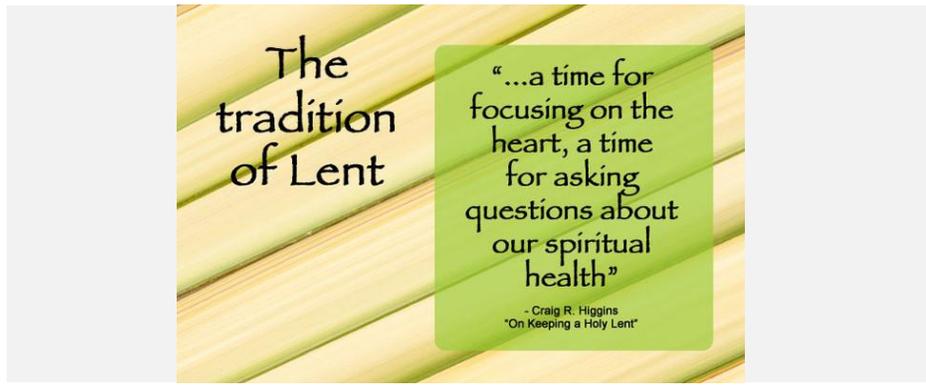
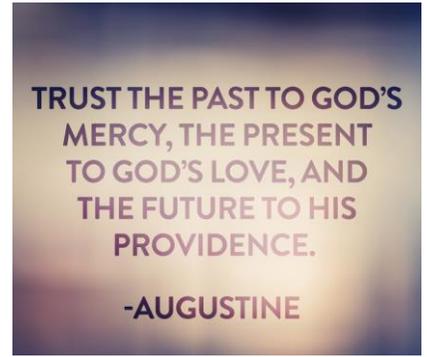




Coloma Catholic Life.



Pope Francis



Prayer Intention for February:

Violence against women.

'We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.'

Video: <https://thepopevideo.org/>

Tweet: 'In this Lenten season, accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ means, first of all, opening our hearts to God's word, which the Church passes on from generation to generation.'

Liturgical Year

Week: 1st Sunday in Lent.

Colour: Purple

Lent



Lent is a special time of prayer, penance, fasting and good works (almsgiving) in preparation for the celebration of Easter. The word **lent** is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words **lencten** meaning 'Spring' and **lenctentid**, which literally means not only 'Springtide' but also the word for 'March'.

Present fasting and abstinence laws are very simple: On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the faithful fast and abstain from meat. We are still encouraged 'to give up something' for Lent as a sacrifice. On Sundays and solemnities like St Joseph's Day, March 19 and the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th, we can break the fast.

At least once a year, especially during Lent we are strongly encouraged to receive absolution in sacramental confession for any mortal sin and to receive the Eucharist during the Easter season.

Lenten Resources

Resources for prayer and reflection during Lent can be found here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Secondary-and-youth-resources/Lent-resources-young-people>

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/lent-2021/resources-for-lent-2021>

Follow me: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus



The Archdiocese of Southwark is offering a retreat experience for the people and parishes during Lent 2021, beginning on the first Sunday of Lent and ending in Holy week. Please use the link below:

<http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk/followme>

Invited 2021 – Diocese of Arundel & Brighton

Lenten retreat for those living in the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton.

“We will be exploring God’s *invitation* to enter into relationship with Him and what that means for our lives. It will be a wonderful journey of discovery that helps us to know more deeply who we are in the eyes of God and to live authentically as His beloved. There will be challenges - we may have to take a 'long hard look' at ourselves - but by the end of the programme we aim to be transformed and empowered to become Spirit filled disciples who rejoice in God’s goodness and want to build His Kingdom here on earth.”

<https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/news/invited-2021>



Religious Festivals

Purim – Judaism, 26th February

Purim is a carnival festival which recalls how the Jewish community of Persia was saved from being massacred through the actions of a young Jewish woman, as is retold in the Book of Esther. The whole book, in the form of a handwritten scroll, the *Megillah*, is read twice in the synagogue, once on the evening of Purim and then again on the following day.

Colourful costumes and masks are often worn amid lots of noise as the name of Haman (the villain of the story) is drowned out by the congregation with rattles and hooters and boos when it is read out. Many people come for the reading of the *Megillah* in fancy dress. *Hamantashen* (triangular cakes filled with poppy seeds, or with jam or chocolate) are baked and eaten at this time, so named after the triangular pockets or hats or ears said to be in courtly fashion at the time.

Purim means Lots and stems from Haman’s use of lots to determine the date of the pogrom he was planning of all Jews throughout the Persian empire. Since Moredechai, the leader of the Jewish community in Sushan, the capital city, had refused to bow down to Haman, who was the Prime Minister of Ahasuerus, the Persian King, Haman vowed ‘to destroy, kill and annihilate all Jews, young and old, infant and women, in a single day.’



King Ahasuerus had sought a new wife to replace his previous wife, Vashti, whom he had rejected for disobedience. His new Queen, Esther, who was Jewish and Mordechai's cousin, prayed and fasted along with her fellow Jews for three days, and then risked her life by visiting the King unbidden to invite him to a party where she appealed for the life of her fellow Jews. The King listened to her and Haman was found guilty and hanged on a gallows he had previously erected for Mordechai. Mordechai, who had earlier exposed a plot to assassinate the King, now became the king's new Prime Minister.

The book of Esther is read aloud in its fullness in the evening of one day and the daytime of the next, in what has become the most joyous day in the Jewish calendar. It celebrates divine deliverance from oppression and marked a new sense of purpose for the Israelite community, who from that time became known as 'Jews'.

On this day, which always follows a fast throughout the previous day in memory of Esther's three days of fasting, Jews are expected to observe four commands or mitzvots: to listen to the reading of the *Megillah*; to give money to at least two poor people in the community, so as to stress the unity of all Jewish people; to send gifts of at least two kinds of food and drink to at least one friend; and to share in a festive meal where food and drink are taken 'until each person present cannot distinguish between 'cursed is Haman' and 'blessed is Mordechai'.

Magha Puja – Buddhism, 26th February



This festival commemorates two occasions, one that took place in the month of Magha, seven weeks after the Buddha's enlightenment. Five of his companions from his years of austerity had joined him and he taught them the Four Noble Truths; the other occasion was 45 years later, when 1,250 enlightened personal disciples of the Buddha came spontaneously to the Bamboo Grove at Rajagaha on the full moon of Magha (usually in late February or early March). This was one of the earliest large gatherings of Buddhists. On that day the Buddha taught the main principles of the Dhamma and set out his teachings to the assembled arahats (enlightened monks) for them to learn and follow.

On this later Magha Puja Day, the Buddha spoke to his disciple Ananda and told him that he was near the end of his life and had chosen to die in three months time. He also outlined a summary of his teachings and a code of discipline (which monks are expected to recite every fortnight). Magha Puja Day thus brackets the Buddha's teaching life, providing a reason as to why it is one of the most important Buddhist festivals. The day is normally observed with several hours of meditation, chanting and listening to sermons.

All 1250 of these monks were direct disciples of the Buddha, having been ordained by him at various stages of his life. As a result of this gathering of disciples, the full moon of Magha has also come to be known as 'Sangha day' and is a time when monks gather together to share their knowledge and experiences. In the West it falls towards the end of winter when many of the monasteries have just finished a long retreat, and such a gathering is a joyous time. Many will not have seen each other for some months, and with the arising of spring and the end of a long retreat there is much for them to share.

The day involves reflection on what it means to be part of the sangha – this including the fourfold sangha: lay men and women, monks and nuns; but because of the origin of the event it tends not to be so significant for lay people. For the ordained community who have come together there may be a series of meetings to discuss

various aspects of the community's teachings, periods of group meditation, talks given by senior members of the community (both resident and visiting) and a variety of other events – often quite spontaneous – over a period of several days.

In Thailand, by contrast, it is very much a holiday time. At every Buddhist temple, Buddhists gather after dark. They bring flowers, incense, & candles. When these are lit, the worshippers circle the temple's main hall three times, once for each of the Three Jewels of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Sangha, and the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha).

Saints of the Week

St Peter's Chair – 22nd February



The feast of the Chair of St. Peter has nothing to do with a piece of furniture.

The “chair” symbolizes the authority of St Peter and his successors who have served the Church of Jesus Christ as the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). As a matter of fact, in Rome's St. Peter's Basilica, there is a chair, enshrined in the sumptuous Altar of the Chair of St. Peter by the great architect Bernini, but it is a symbol representing the 2,000-

year-old papacy and unity the Pope continues to bring to Catholics around the world. Without such unity the Church would splinter into numerous sects and divisions.

Every year on Feb. 22, the Church celebrates the continuing role of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, beginning with St Peter. The use of the term chair in the feast day comes from the Latin term *cathedra*, meaning the seat of government.

St Peter's feast day, originally called the feast of the Chair of St. Peter in Rome, began in the fourth century. It was held on 18th January, as that was believed to be the day when Peter gave his first homily in Rome. At some point before the 16th-century Protestant revolt, the feast was combined with the feast of St. Peter's Chair in Antioch. When Martin Luther revolted from the Church, Protestant heretics claimed that Peter was never in Rome and, thus, he could not have been the Bishop of Rome. Consequently, in their opinion, there could be no Pope as claimed by Catholics.

In order to reject this false Protestant challenge, Pope Paul IV (r. 1555-1559) reinstated the feast of the Chair of Peter in Rome in 1558. As a result, for 400 years the Church celebrated two feast days regarding the Chair of Peter. One feast reflected on Peter's role in Antioch, the other on his role in Rome. In 1962, Pope John XXIII combined the two feasts into one, which is the feast of the Chair of St. Peter, held on 22nd February each year.

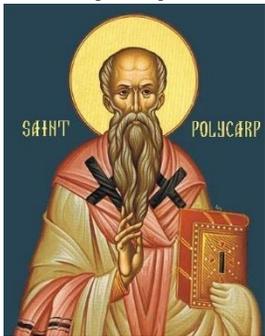
On this feast day, the universal Church acknowledges that St. Peter was the first Pope and that his mission continues through the Holy Father today. Simply stated, that mission is to care for the people of God; to carry on the customs, rituals, teachings and truths of Jesus; and to uphold the unity of His Church. Moreover, the

Church proclaims that the authority given to St. Peter by Our Lord has been handed down to Peter's successors for the past 2,000 years.

This day is not just about apostolic succession in respect to the Pope and the Bishops. Among the laity, it symbolizes an unspoken confidence that the Church of Jesus does not change from age to age; that the truths of the Gospel still form the basis of our faith; that these eternal truths are reflected in every Catholic parish and in every Mass. It is a confidence that the leader of the Catholic Church adheres to and will never deny the precepts and principles of the Church of Jesus. The Church firmly believes that it is part of the mystical body of Christ, a holy people, a holy priesthood.

In the late fourth century, St. Jerome wrote to Pope Damasus I: "I follow no leader but Christ and join in communion with none but Your Blessedness, that is, with the chair of Peter. I know that this is the rock on which the Church has been built. Whoever eats the Lamb outside this house is profane. Anyone who is not in the Ark of Noah will perish when the flood prevails."

St Polycarp, Bishop, Martyr – 23rd February



Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, disciple of Saint John the Apostle and friend of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, was a revered Christian leader during the first half of the second century.

Saint Ignatius, on his way to Rome to be martyred, visited Polycarp at Smyrna, and later at Troas wrote him a personal letter. The Asia Minor Churches recognized Polycarp's leadership by choosing him as a representative to discuss with Pope Anicetus the date of the Easter celebration in Rome—a major controversy in the early Church.

Only one of the many letters written by Polycarp has been preserved, the one he wrote to the Church of Philippi in Macedonia.

At 86, Polycarp was led into the crowded Smyrna stadium to be burned alive. The flames did not harm him and he was finally killed by a dagger. The centurion ordered the saint's body burned. The "Acts" of Polycarp's martyrdom are the earliest preserved, fully reliable account of a Christian martyr's death. He died in 155.

What to Give Up...

Give up complaining ...	focus on Gratitude
Give up pessimism ...	become an Optimist
Give up worry ...	trust Divine Providence
Give up bitterness ...	turn to Forgiveness
Give up hatred ...	return Good for evil
Give up negativism ...	be Positive
Give up anger ...	be More Patient
Give up pettiness ...	become Mature
Give up gloom ...	enjoy the Beauty all around you
Give up jealousy ...	pray for Trust
Give up gossiping ...	control your Tongue
Give up sin ...	turn to Virtue
Give up giving up ...	Hang in there!