



Dear parishioners,

1. We have now begun the season of **Lent** – a time for reflection on our own lives and our needs for God’s mercy. In the words of the great Bishop Challoner (in his ‘Meditations’):

‘Let us consider first, that besides the great business of doing penance for our sins, which is the main design of Lent, it is also instituted to be, in a particular manner, a time of **devotion**, in which we may worthily commemorate the sufferings and death of our Redeemer, and make them the subject of our daily meditations; in which also we may, by more than ordinary recollection and prayer, dispose our souls for duly celebrating the great Paschal solemnity, and imitating therein the Resurrection of the Son of God, and in which we may in such manner cleanse and purify our souls by spiritual exercises as to be fit to approach worthily (as the Church commands us) to the divine mysteries at Easter. See, my soul, that thou keep Lent in such a manner as to answer these ends’.

2. Archbishop John Wilson and the Diocesan Spirituality Commission are offering a **Retreat for Lent**, which you can follow in your own home.

Using the link below, you can watch a short video reflection each week, download prayer materials and other resources which can help you make the best use of whatever time and opportunity you may have during your week.

There are also additional materials for use by parish and other groups, either in person or via Zoom/Teams or similar.

If you are looking for a way to deepen your life of prayer this Lent, click on <http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk/followme> where you can also sign up to receive materials directly to your email.

3. This pandemic has reminded us of the value of being part of a supportive local community and in this spirit, **we have organised a Friends of Holy Ghost group to offer practical help to those in the Parish who may need it.**

This help could include picking up prescriptions, shopping for essentials, collecting parcels - amongst other things.

If you, or someone you know in the parish, would welcome this sort of help, then please call us on 07312077830 or email us at hgbalhamvolunteers@gmail.com any day between 9am and 6pm. One of the Friends will answer and arrange help as needed from our team of volunteers.

4. Last, but by no means least, please don't forget that we need your help with stewarding in church. Our churches are permitted by law to open and hold services during the lockdown, but they need to be safe places. **Our very special gratitude goes out to our stewards**, whose work is now more important than ever. If you value our open churches, and the ability to come to Mass, please do consider volunteering as a steward – we need your help.

We have a 'Doodle' where you can sign up to help during February – please follow this link:

<https://doodle.com/poll/znzccbchagzge2d8>

If you have any difficulty is using the Doodle, or other questions, you can email us at holyghostvolunteers@gmail.com. Thank you!

With our best wishes and every blessing,

Fr Richard and Fr Giovanni