

## From the Vicar

### Reflections on the season of Lent

The traditional approach to Lent seems to be very depressing in many ways: the change of frontals, no flowers in church, statues covered in purple cloths, even the hymns that we sing, all tend to drag the mood down. This year's Lent started during winter while it is still dark outside, and this adds another layer of a sombre atmosphere to it.

Lent is meant to be an opportunity to grow in holiness, to deny ourselves and follow Christ. Jesus' call to discipleship is to "follow him" with a double meaning of, "come with me" and "imitate what I do". But we are so easily distracted by numerous voices around us, that we need help of others to keep us on the right path. That is exactly the reason why we need to fellowship with others.

This requires a positive attitude to inspire us. So, we begin by identifying what we want to achieve during Lent and make plans to attain it. By all means, don't give up chocolate or wine simply as begrudging self-denial, but rather as some way of losing weight or adopting a healthy lifestyle, or perhaps saving money to give to the church. It is much better, to focus on taking up a worthwhile new project, rather than giving up a "naughty pleasure". We could do more by helping other people like family or neighbours, even at the cost of missing your favourite TV programme.

Some people find it helpful to read a suitable book during Lent to gain new insights and deepen their faith. Others join group discussions or embark on a Lent course to explore contemporary issues. You can always ask your Vicar to recommend something for yourself.

So, friends embrace Lent as an opportunity for growth in faith and love for God. Lent is a gift of grace to help us grow closer to God - and what could be better than that?

Have a good Lent and enjoy rather than endure it.

### Reverend Sydwell Isaac

Your Vicar



**Could you offer a safe, friendly home to a refugee rebuilding their life in the UK?**

### Refugee Lodgings Project - Greater Together Manchester

This project was created to address the growing issue of newly recognised refugees becoming street homeless soon after leaving Home Office accommodation.

We wanted to offer a compassionate, community-focused solution. We're inviting people across Greater Manchester with a spare room to provide a temporary home for a refugee who has recently received their status. These placements typically last between three and six months and are designed to offer safety, security, and the chance to connect with the local community.

We will support both the resident landlord and the refugee lodger throughout the entire placement. This ensures that every match is safe, positive, and mutually respectful.

During this period of stability, refugees gain the time and support they need to move confidently into private rented accommodation or another long-term housing option.

By opening your door, you can help a refugee avoid homelessness and begin their new chapter in the UK with dignity and hope.

If you're interested in getting involved or would like to learn more, please reach out via the contact details below;

**Email:** [lodgings@greatertogethermanchester.org](mailto:lodgings@greatertogethermanchester.org)

**Phone:** 07732403929