

Lent 2010

Quite often people like to give me things to read. I sometimes find its helpful and other times I think of the pile of things on my desk that I need to read and if I had a spare couple of hours would love to read instead!

Just before coming to the Berechurch someone put in my hand a clipping from a news paper with the title: "Church decides that Lent should really be more of a laugh". The article made a point of gently ribbing the Church of England over its many challenges but also plugged the new 'Love life, live Lent' resource. The title 'Love life, live Lent' is a good guide to a positive way of approaching Lent. As the church of England Spokes person of the time commented, 'Traditionally Lent has been seen as a sombre time of sackcloth and ashes. What we are suggesting is that people share jokes, which is a way of kick starting a very positive take on the season'. At the time of going to press there had been no additions to the Website jokes spot, but the Times offered this one.

'A pub regular always bought his pints of beer in three's. When asked he said that he did it as a promise to always have a drink with his two brothers but they had since emigrated to Australia. One day he comes in and orders just two pints! He is asked by the bar man why – oh I've given up Beer for Lent, but my brothers haven't!'

One of the challenges for Christians is to get the right balance between not being flippant about important things like Lenten fasts and equally not being the bore of the party. At our Ash Wednesday service Jesus challenges folks who are fasting not to look miserable but to make yourself look good! Instead of making a big deal about your fast to be noticed by others, observe your fast discreetly and honour God alone!

I don't know if the person who gave me the clipping thought I needed cheering up or whether they thought I took life too seriously! But as we reflected at the service on Wednesday, the grace and bounty of the Lent tradition is such that it is 'bookended by two feasts'. As Christians we are called to love life, therefore if we choose to give up chocolate it's actually a real challenge. Lets love life and really live Lent. Instead of enduring a humourless life and a gritted teeth Lent, lets enjoy the gift of life and live Lent!

Andrew +