

Slow down.

We know we need to, and we say we want to. For most of us, however, slowing down is hard. We complain about the pace of life here in Singapore, but we're so used to running fast that it's not easy to stop. Left to ourselves, we might never do it!

Here's where the church calendar can be a helpful aid. Regardless of what's going on in our lives, the church year has a defined rhythm. This gives us a kind of stability as it systematically directs us, according to the seasons, to focus on unchanging truths.

During Lent, we are guided to slow down, giving attention to spiritual disciplines such as prayer and fasting. Many of us would supplement our regular Bible reading with additional devotional materials, facilitating deeper theological reflection. All this is done with an emphasis on introspection, as we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in self-examination and repentance.

Lent may also be understood as a time of "detoxing". The discipline of fasting helps to keep our appetites in check. Almsgiving is another discipline commonly practised during Lent. Like fasting, it can help us to guard against excessive self-gratification, as we choose to give to the needy instead of spending more on ourselves. These disciplines help us to direct our desires towards the things of God.



THE VICAR WRITES

How great an impact Lent can have on our lives is, to a large extent, up to us. If we choose not to observe Lent, or if we neglect to practise spiritual disciplines, or if we merely go through the motions when practising them, we will miss an incredible opportunity to experience the transforming power of God. Let's not allow this season to pass us by.

As part of our observance of Lent, let me encourage you to set aside Holy Week for God. It's great that many of us are committed to come and worship on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, and many are looking forward to the resumption of the Easter dawn service. Please also endeavour to join us for the meditations on Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, when Revd Dr Tan Soo-Inn will be leading us on a journey of spiritual reflection. May Holy Week 2024 leave its mark on us.

Brothers and sisters, let us faithfully keep this Lent. Amen.

