

~~February is a month having come from the Latin word februum after several names, changes. Beginning in Roman times as the month of purification (from februum = purification) it was the last month in the lunar calendar until around 450 BC and contained many~~

~~and even kale (cabbage) - which~~ figured in Old English. Ultimately February was out.

In Catholic tradition, February retained the theme of the Hebrew calendar month recognised as the Month of Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary although the Second Vatican Council encouraged setting aside months of observance in favour of other saints throughout the year.

~~There are quite a few saints' days in February which would recognise St Brigid, St Blasius (when we have threats), St Agatha, St Paul Milij and Companions, St Scholastica, and so on, even St to Saints Cyril and Methodius in the calendar, still has popular support.~~

On February 2nd, Candlemas, which is both the Feast of the Presentation in the Temple and the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary – both of which are signs of Mosaic Law, we recognise the role of the Jewish faith in Jesus' childhood. In Matthew 5:17, he reminds us that he has come to fulfil

the people into a different way of life than that to which they were accustomed.

~~As Lent Wednesdays commence – the beginning of Lent – in February this month becomes a time of increasing focus as we accompany Christ towards the Cross. Pope Francis reminds us time and time again that we are called to accompaniment, especially with those who are vulnerable and needy, although none of us should ever feel that we~~

~~the Lord, a relationship that is based on trust, hope and love. Easter comes at the end of our experience of conversion. And then we begin our growth.~~

Lent should mean more to us than giving up chocolate, although it perhaps easier to make

~~sacrifice a vice which is often the beginning of a season which requires change, these three requirements are a way of fulfilling the two Great Commandments which Jesus gave us in Matthew 22:36-40. In following the commandments, we are to love God above all else and our neighbour as ourselves. When we fast, we show solidarity with those who are hungry; when we give alms, we concretely address the issue of need and to alleviate it. Who does not know the Psalm which has Christ as its head, offering up our desire that "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven".~~

~~Fasting can also be from other than food; perhaps we fast from greed or complacency or over indulgences of other kinds. But fasting does not mean spiritual benefit alone, it is tied to solid contemplation of the commandments we are doing it. Matthew 6:1-18 is the classic teaching of Jesus on this. Lent is a time again as a source of spiritual challenge and inspiration. Rather than seeing Lent as a time to be sullen and sombre, we are called to join the journey with joy and energy. "Come let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122)~~