

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 March

This weekend is Saturday the 21 and Sunday the 22 March, beginning the Fourth Week of Lent.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo sing: 'Baba wethu singenile': 'Our father, we have entered in the holy place, as you have invited us. Be close to us. Open our hearts to understand your word. Remove the darkness that surrounds us and give us your light.'

In this weekend's reading, St Paul asks the Church in Ephesus to witness in the world by using a striking image; the world is dark and those in the Church are the light which enlightens the darkness. In their actions, provided they are 'good, right and true' people will perceive Christ. It's striking in this passage that Paul tells the Ephesians to be light in the world, for this echoes what Jesus says of himself in St John's Gospel. There Jesus says that he is the light of the world; St Paul is reminding us that, whilst we await the coming of Our Lord, we must attempt to be light in the world and in so doing to manifest him in the world. During the season of Lent, we prepare ourselves to receive the Light of the Resurrection at Easter, and this week's readings have all in some way picked up on this relationship between the darkness of sin and the Light of God. Through this Lenten season we prepare ourselves to carry Christ's Light into the world. This can be a challenge – it isn't easy for us to be Christ in the world. Pray particularly for the graces you need to achieve this throughout Lent, and particularly now as we listen to this reading from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

How can you be a light in the world – both as an individual and as part of a wider faith community? Spend some time thinking about that; what is God asking of you?

How can you be light in the darkness of the world? How do you help to illuminate other people's lives?

Are there times when that light of Christ has become dimmed in your life because of worry or stress or because God seems far away? Ask God to heal your worries; to shoulder your burdens and to manifest Himself ever more clearly to you.

As you listen again, notice the point that Paul is trying to make here – 'Try to discover what the Lord wants of you...' As you hear these words, enter deeper into a conversation with God about what He is calling you to.

Being light in the world brings a terrible responsibility and there are, sadly, times when the Church fails to live up to that responsibility. Perhaps you can use this last period of time to pray for forgiveness for those times you have neglected to be a light in the world. But also, commit yourself to more closely follow the call of God.