

# Inspiring Vision : Diocese Lent Course



## Hello

*“Through Lent 2018, as a central aspect of the Diocesan Year of Prayer, we have asked six people to choose their favourite painting, picture, or work of art and to explain what their choice says about prayer.”*

Contributors include the **Archbishop of Canterbury**, **Dame Patricia Routledge** (Actor and Broadcaster), **The Revd Lucy Winkett** (Rector of St James', Piccadilly, writer and broadcaster), **Dame Caroline Spelman** (MP and Second Estates Commissioner) and **Charles Harrison** (Director of Music at Chichester Cathedral).

For each week of Lent, there is :  
- A specially designed wall chart  
- The chosen painting  
- A podcast



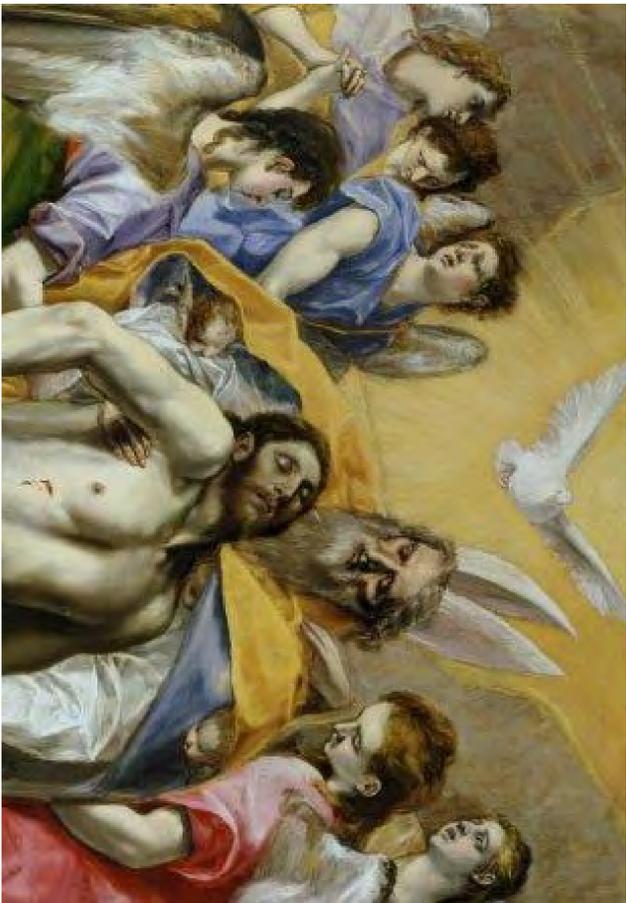
Each week, people are invited to reflect on the chosen painting by listening to a specially produced podcast (of around 15 minutes) in which the guest explains the significance of the chosen work to them personally. These are available on the website :  
[www.chichester.anglican.org/lentcourse2018](http://www.chichester.anglican.org/lentcourse2018)

In so doing, the guests raise questions for all of us about our own prayer life and how our prayers develop as we mature, journey on our pilgrimage and discover more about the divine mystery as God speaks to us in good times and bad.

An accompanying set of notes for each session suggest Scripture Readings and exercises for us in response to what we see and hear. Please download these from the website.

By the end of the six weeks we hope that each participant's focus on their own prayer life will have been invigorated and challenged as a key aspect of our Year of Prayer.

+ Martin



## Week One : Prayer and The Trinity

**BISHOP MARTIN WARNER, BISHOP OF CHICHESTER**  
Painting : Holy Trinity by El Greco

**We will be challenged to look at how The Trinity inspires our prayer life and how the different persons of The Trinity guide and calve us in our spiritual lives.**

Consider for a couple of moments what your initial reactions to, and feelings about, the painting are. It may be a picture that is new to you, or one that is very familiar.

What captures your imagination as you see it now?

After listening to the Podcast – reflect on what Bishop Martin is saying and then consider the questions in the accompanying notes.

A Prayer for you to use this week

**Almighty and eternal God,  
you have revealed yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
and live and reign in the perfect unity of love:  
hold us firm in this faith,  
that we may know you in all your ways  
and evermore rejoice in your eternal glory,  
who are three Persons yet one God,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

Post-Communion, Trinity Sunday (Common Worship)

## Week Two : Prayer in Challenging Times

**THE REVd LUCY WINKETT, RECTOR OF ST JAMES', PICCADILLY**

Painting: The Scream by Edward Munch

**Writer and Broadcaster Lucy Winkett, formerly at St Paul's Cathedral and now Rector of St James', Piccadilly encourages us to explore prayer in difficult times on our journey and what scripture says to us about staying close to God, even when we feel alone.**

Her chosen painting has inspired her to think about how to wrestle with prayer - it's not always easy!

Some questions to consider in the light of the Podcast once you have listened to it are:

*- What other images of pain or distress do you know, and how have they made an impression on you?*

*- What has it been like for you to try to pray in challenging times?*

*- Lucy talks about the difficulty of finding silence in a noisy world. Do you want to be silent, and why?*

There are further questions in the notes.

Psalms 77:1-10 is an insightful passage of scripture for reflection this week.





## Week Three : Prayer and Discipleship

**ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN WELBY, THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

*Painting: The Call of Levi by Caravaggio.*

**Justin Welby reveals his favourite painting on the theme of prayer. In a wide-ranging podcast, the Archbishop is candid about the difficulties of praying as a disciple of Jesus in hugely challenging times.**

Before listening to the podcast, look at the painting for a couple of moments. What are your initial reactions to it? How do you feel about it? It may be a picture that is new to you, or one that is familiar. What captures your imagination as you see it now?

Furthermore, consider the Archbishop's emphasis on a Rule of Life. He talks about making time – even a little time – for God, and being regular in prayer.

He also speaks of prayer as something which is never self-centred, but which reaches out to God in conversation.

This painting demands that we return to it again and again. As Archbishop Justin says – we see something new of God daily if we persist in prayer however busy and challenging that task may be.

Further Recommended reading: *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship (Pocket Books, 1st Touchstone edition, 1995)*



## Week Five : The Joy and Excitement of Prayer

**CHARLES HARRISON, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AT CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL**

*Chichester Cathedral Window by Chagall*

**Prayers of praise surprisingly don't come easily and yet, in the Old Testament Wisdom Literature, there are many clues as to why prayers should be immersed in gratitude and thanksgiving to God our creator and redeemer:**

Charles believes that music enhances our sense of prayerfulness and chooses his favourite visual image to reflect this.

We traditionally see Lent as a time that is solemn, quiet, reflective – perhaps a period of withdrawal, self-discipline, austerity and abstinence, but Charles Harrison says that it is not a time for abandoning hope but rather ‘an opportunity to create space in our spiritual lives.’

*-In what ways are you experiencing Lent differently this year?  
- How easy or difficult are you finding it, amidst a busy life, to make space to pray, listen to God, and focus on the hope that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ brings to the world?*

For prayer this week:

**Praise the Lord!**

**Praise God in his sanctuary.**

**Praise him for his mighty deeds.**

**Praise him according to his surpassing greatness!**

**Praise him with trumpet sound.**

**Praise him with lute and harp!**

**Praise him with tambourine and dance;**

**Praise him with strings and pipe!**

**Praise him with clanging cymbals;**

**praise him with loud clashing cymbals!**

**Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!**

**Praise the Lord!**

*Psalms 150*

## Week Four : Prayer as Life Evolves

**DAME PATRICIA ROUTLEDGE, ACTOR AND BROADCASTER**

*Painting: L'Infernie by Gustav Courbet*

**After a lifetime in the theatre and as one of the best known faces on British television, Dame Patricia introduces her favourite painting and what it says to her about her prayer life. In a very personal interview she explores how, as life develops and changes, our prayer life inevitably reflects that we are maturing and growing older. And it's not always easy!**

After listening to this week's Podcast you might like to consider these sample questions. There are others in the notes which accompany this course.

*-How you considered the ageing process, and how it relates to your own discipleship and spiritual journey?*

*-When have you felt yourself to be part of a greater scheme, or faced by God's mysterious 'otherness'?*

*-How has your own experience of prayer changed through the course of your life?*

*-How do you continue to find meaning in prayers, and forms of words in church, which are very familiar? You may like to reflect on well-known texts such as the General Confession, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.*

Dame Patricia urges us to revisit the significance of the Lord's Prayer as Jesus taught it. Not to lose sight of it. And to pray it from the heart.



## Week Six : Prayer Repentance and Forgiveness

**DAME CAROLINE SPELMAN, MP AND SECOND ESTATES COMMISSIONER**

*Painting: The Prodigal Son by Rembrandt*

**As Holy Week approaches, Dame Caroline takes some time out to reflect on her favourite work of art and the parable it evokes.**

Repentance and Forgiveness often dominate the headlines but everyone knows the challenge posed by both is hardly an easy one. How do we forgive others? Do we ourselves need to be forgiven? How does prayer play a part? And can we know God's forgiveness?

Dame Caroline draws our attention to the father's big hands resting on the shoulders of his son. Spend a few moments looking at your own hands. Ask yourself, are these forgiving hands? Are they grasping hands? Are they hands for holding?

Are they hands that keep people at a distance? Are they welcoming hands? Are they tight, clenched hands? Are they exhausted hands? Are they caring hands?

As observers of this painting, we are looking at an intimate moment of reconciliation. How do we respond and engage when we see the need for acts of reconciliation in the wider world, and situations closer to home?

Our prayer is that before Easter arrives we may experience for ourselves true repentance.

