

An article on Lent from Bishop John:



It might feel as though we have been in the season of Lent for a very long time. Because of the pandemic we weren't able to celebrate Easter properly last year and the remainder of the year had a distinctly penitential feel to it, as has the first part of 2021.

There has been so much sadness, grief and loss during these past few months and we shall be living with the consequences of COVID-19 for years to come. My hope and my prayer, though, is that not all of those consequences will be bad.

Lent is the time for us to turn our faces towards Jerusalem and prepare to follow our Lord on the way of the cross. We do that knowing that out of crucifixion, God brought resurrection. That is the Christian pattern of things – God's redemption involves bringing good out of bad, joy out of pain, new life out of death.

After the resurrection Peter wanted to go back to fishing. It was what was familiar to him and he felt he could find comfort in that. But God was calling him to something much more exciting.

It would be a sadness for us to try to go back to the way things were before the pandemic, just as it would have been for Peter simply to resume his life as a fisherman. Like Peter, I believe God is calling us to something much more exciting.

This year, at the end of what feels like a very long Lent, it would be good for us to reflect upon and pray about what the 'new normal' might look like. I hope it will involve more care, more community, more goodness and more Godliness – but God will work things out much more wonderfully than I could ever plan.