

Fair Trade Lent Worship Resources Year A 2021.

Introduction

Lent is that season of the Christian year between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Many observe it as a time of reflection and preparation for Easter. Lent is reminiscent of the 40 days of fasting and temptation experienced by Jesus in the wilderness. The Sundays are excluded from this as every Sunday of the year is a celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The word 'Lent' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word of Spring and relates to the lengthening of days which is the experience of people in the Northern Hemisphere as they emerge from cold, dark winter.

This is a series of brief reflections as we look at the Sunday readings for Lent with Fair Trade eyes. For each Sunday there is a brief reflection, a prayer which may be incorporated in Sunday worship and other resources in the form of videos or links.

These have been prepared by members of the Executive Committee of the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand with assistance from the Rev Heather Coombes.

Most of the Sunday readings are linked to the Anglican Church's version of the Revised Common Lectionary.

Thinking ahead to Easter

Avoid a mad scramble in search of Fairtrade Easter Eggs. Start the Easter Egg hunt now and use the various links in these Reflections (especially the chocolate links in First Sunday in Lent) to find the eggs for you.

First Sunday of Lent 21.2.2021

- [Genesis 9:8-17](#)
- [1 Peter 3:18-22](#)
- [Mark 1:9-15](#)
- **Psalm 25:1-9**

The Social Gospel Movement flourished in late 19th / early 20th century in the US. Its proponents, mostly Protestant Christian leaders encouraged people to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and to take seriously his mandate to love neighbours in the face of rampant rising capitalism.

Some achievements of the Social Gospel movement were the provision of decent housing and fair wages and working conditions for the poor. Martin Luther King was greatly influenced by social gospel writers.

Today, on the first Sunday of Lent, we follow Jesus from his Baptism by John, through the wilderness of Temptations, to his proclaiming the Gospel of God, succinctly expressed in Mark's Gospel.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (Mark 1:14,15)

The Gospel is the Gospel. Good News is Good News and there can be no peeling away from the Gospel to have a 'Social' Gospel and a 'Spiritual' Gospel. The good news of Jesus is for the whole of life for every person. This means we must not cease from advocating for the themes of the Social Gospel Movement: Fair Working Conditions, living wages for workers whether in our country, harvesting fruit and vegetables or working in fast food outlets, or overseas providing clothes and consumables for us. It is the Gospel of Justice.

As John Wimber expresses it:

"If we are in relationship with God and if we are living under his kingdom, we will seek justice for all those around us. Social justice isn't a new gospel; rather, it flows directly from the gospel of forgiveness and the new life of Christ. Seeking justice in society has gone hand in hand with past revivals; great leaders in the history of the church have understood the relationship between the gospel and justice. Seeking justice and true social concern aren't options; they are marks of true discipleship."

Jesus's call to repent and believe is well interpreted by Eugene Peterson: "Time's up! God's kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the message. (The Message)

A common practice in Lent is to give up something we enjoy as a mark of penance and to focus our attention on the events of Jesus as we lead up to Easter. Perhaps giving up non-Fair Trade tea, coffee, chocolate and intentionally searching for Fair Trade alternatives could be a good step.

This would be a practical response to Jesus' call to repent, to change your life, to make a U-turn as we turn from purchasing products where workers are exploited to where fairness abounds.

Prayer.

Loving God, we thank you for these momentous events as Jesus commences his ministry:
His Baptism by John in the Jordan,
His Temptations in the wilderness,
His declaration of the Good News, the Gospel of God.

Lord, help us to hear the Gospel.
The Gospel of Peace when we are unsettled,
The Gospel of Hope when the way seems unclear and confused,
The Gospel of Joy amidst pain and suffering,
The Gospel of Love, calling us from following our own desires and pleasures,
To the Love of Jesus and service of the world.
As we draw nearer to you,
Help us to see with renewed eyes where we can live your Gospel in your world.

Any understanding of the gospel which does not foster a desire for social justice and freedom is impoverished. (Bruce Mullan Thought for the day)

Useful resources and ideas:

Here is a story of Fairtrade PNG coffee farmers.

<https://fairtradeanz.org/for-consumers/what-is-fairtrade>

Here is where to purchase Fairtrade tea and coffee this Lent and beyond.

<https://fairtradeanz.org/for-consumers/what-is-fairtrade/get-involved/find-fairtrade>

Links to help you locate Fair Trade Chocolate, Coffee and Tea

Be Slavery Free <https://beslaveryfree.com/chocolate>

Fairtrade Australia <http://fairtrade.com.au/Fairtrade-Products/Chocolate-cocoa> Uplift Fair Trade

<https://upliftfairtrade.com.au/collections/fair-trade-food>

Tribes and Nations <https://tribesandnations.com.au/>

The Elephant Emporium <https://www.theelephantemporium.com.au>

Global Conduct <http://www.globalconduct.com.au/>

Jasper <https://www.jaspercoffee.com>

Koguis <http://www.koguis.com.au/en/87-fair-trade-coffee>

Apsara <https://www.facebook.com/ApsaraEthicalGifts/>

Eloments <https://eloments.com>

Only Just Fair Trade <https://www.onlyjust.com.au>

The Fair Trader <https://thefairtraderstore.com.au>

Tradewinds <https://www.tradewinds.org.au>

Second Sunday of Lent 28.2.2021

[Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16](#)

[Romans 4:13-25](#)

[Mark 8:31-38](#)

Psalm 22:22-30

Doing justice includes not only the righting of wrongs, but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable. (Timothy Keller)

Reflection

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? (Mark 8:34-37)

When we shop there are a number of factors that influence our decisions. For clothing we ask questions such as will it fit, will I look good in it and is the right style and colour? For functional items we will ask about quality, how long will it last and will it do the job I want it to do? For food and consumables, we ask about taste. We may also seek organic food and food that has been farmed sustainably. These days we may seek goods that are produced in Australia.

When we consider the mandate for followers of Jesus to deny ourselves, take up our crosses and follow him, we might ask whether we need the items at all.

Mostly shoppers are motivated by price. A way of following Jesus in Lent might be for us to ask whether the price we are paying reflects a fair and living wage for those farmers or workers who produced the goods we consume.

Paying the right price for a product may cost us more, may be a bit more difficult as we locate ethically sourced goods but surely it is a way of expressing Jesus mandate: to deny ourselves and take up our crosses in order to follow him.

The result of our doing this can be summed up by the Psalmist:

The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live forever! (Psalm 22:26)

Prayer

Lord,
Help me to reflect on Jesus' words as I seek to follow Him:
deny myself,
take up my cross,
lose my life for Your sake.
Particularly I think of actions which follow these words
As I make purchases and how they will affect the people who made them.

Oxfam has carried out research on how clothing brands put pressure on suppliers to pay workers below a living wage. This video, featuring Oxfam Australia CEO, Lyn Morgain, shows how unethical purchasing practices create a cycle of poverty.

https://youtu.be/bn_mjR0Ytv0

See more from Oxfam at

https://www.oxfam.org.au/shoppingforabargain/?utm_source=marketo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=OAU-EDM-20201231-DecemberOxaminer-OxaminerDEC20&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTWpZMU5UUm1OekV6T0dWbClzInQiOilzM2IZTGJGdFVuQ1ZSYVIEWTlxXC95azFpdXdDdml6TCtwRWhUYmxvZjRFbUNHRjBGaHVvcHdcLzNkSWI5T1lCc3FQUVdHY0N5NjRHcWpMVkk2MkZ3UmxpVVBBERUJScWJmcnFpYUZGajhITTIPNCtVb3dWUlhNaUFzTG45NIR5bEl4In0%3D

Third Sunday of Lent 7.3.2021

- [Exodus 20:1-17](#)
- [1 Corinthians 1:18-25](#)
- [John 2:13-22](#)
- Psalm 19

Reflection

When we read the Ten Commandments it is important to note the first two verses where the people of Israel are reminded of who God is and of what God had done for them.

'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.' (Exodus 20:1,2)

God's great act was to free the people from slavery in Egypt. What follows, the 10 Commandments, are instruction on how they are to live as God's people of freedom.

Sadly, in our world today it is estimated that there are about 50 million people, men, women and children, in slavery. And what is worse it is often the innocent indifference of people like us who keep these people enslaved. A look through the Ten Commandments will quickly reveal those that are being disobeyed by the institution of slavery. Theft is one. Theft of freedom, theft of wages, theft of identity. Murder is another where slavery hastens the death of people.

Building on the Ten Commandments, Jesus promoted the two Great Commandments. To love God and to love our neighbour. Being indifferent to any form of slavery takes us even further from obedience to these great commandments.

Jesus criticised the traders in the Temple for turning it into a marketplace where pilgrims were ripped off as they purchased appropriate coinage or animals for their offerings. Jesus' anger was partly criticism of the greed of the traders, but mostly Jesus wanted to purify the Temple. Only later would his followers realise that the place of worship, the Temple would be replaced by the Resurrected Jesus as the new focus of worship.

There is often a fine line between fair dealing and extortion in merchandising transactions. It is often extremely difficult to identify and purchase products that are completely free of slavery. Among a number of organisations working to identify and eradicate slavery are Be Slavery Free and ACRATH. Contact links are below.

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for the freedom we enjoy.

We thank you for the standard of living we take for granted.

We thank you that you called your people from slavery to freedom and gave them the Law and the Prophets.

Thank you for your twin laws of Love for you and for our neighbours.

As we seek to obey, open our eyes to the slavery behind the products we purchase.

We pray that those in bondage will be free.

Show us how we can be part of that freedom.

Resources.

Be Slavery Free. This link will take you to three brief stories which highlight modern slavery. The 'Be Slavery Free' website has other information and how you can make a difference.

<https://beslaveryfree.com/>

The website of 'Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)' has lots of useful information for groups and schools.

<https://acrath.org.au/>

Fourth Sunday of Lent 14.3.2021

Numbers 21:4-9

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Reflection

Ask people what is the best-known Bible verse and it is probable that the answer will be John 3:16. God's gift of Jesus out of his love for the world, our response, and eternal life. The writer of our reading from Ephesians refers to 'grace', which is that undeserved, unearned, unexpected love of God. The Biblical writers stretch language in order to find words big enough to fully express that love, that steadfast love of the Psalmist.

We can't earn the love of God no matter how wonderful our works may be. We simply accept that love which brings us into a loving, faithful, eternal relationship with God.

Yet that love calls for a response. John describes that response as living in the light and turning from evil ways. In Ephesians it is described as 'good works'.

Jesus did not come to condemn, but if there is no response people condemned themselves. John's Gospel describes this as people who prefer to live in darkness rather than the light of Christ.

How do we define the 'evil' of John's Gospel? What constitutes the 'good works' of Ephesians?

I suggest evil people are those who take advantage of others for personal or financial gain. Attractive investment opportunities which steal people's savings are evil. People who physically and emotionally abuse others are evil. Domestic violence comes to mind, here. Social structures which we accept yet keep people in poverty and disadvantage are evil.

[Etiko](#) is a Fair Trade company whose clothing bears the slogan 'wear no evil'. The implication is that most of the clothing we purchase has a questionable supply chain. See notes for Lent Two.

Hidden behind the boxes and packaging and presentation of every product lies the supply chain. When you buy a garment or product from socks to a motor car you have no idea who made it, what were the working conditions, what pay they received and so on. It's hidden. Fair Trade and the modern anti-slavery movements are trying to bring light on to these supply chains, revealing where there is evil.

'Good works' include many of the activities which engage Christians. For example, spreading the Word through evangelism, relieving poverty and disadvantage in our country and overseas are worthwhile endeavours.

Hopefully these reflections are helping us see that 'good works' can be expressed in the way we make purchases.

Prayer,

Loving God, we thank you that you love us through the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. We acknowledge that your love is freely given, abundantly generous and extraordinarily extravagant.

Help us to respond to your love with our love for you and neighbour.

In love help us turn from the darkness of evil to the brightness of light,

Direct us to good works as a response to your love and the needs of your world.

Resources

The World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) is the global organisation which promotes Fair Trade.

Use this link to explore resources.

<https://wfto.com/>

Fifth Sunday of Lent 21.3.2021

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5:5-10

John 12:20-33

Psalm 51:1-13

Psalm 51

or Psalm 119:9-16

Reflection

Can you remember what it was like learning to drive a car? You had seen people jump into cars, start the engine, move off smoothly, steering to avoid other road users and keep the car on a steady keel, all while engaging in conversation. Looks easy. Then you try. Tricky trying to judge how much accelerator to use. Cornering is difficult at first, turning the wheel too much or too little results in where you might not want to be. Keeping straight without weaving, being aware of other traffic, remembering to signal, negotiating roundabouts. Eventually, most people make it.

We go through various stages. Unconscious incompetence where we don't realise how bad we are. Conscious incompetence where we do realise how bad we are, Conscious competence where we can drive but need to concentrate absolutely and fully, to finally unconscious competence where we are like the experienced drivers we have admired for their skill.

For Jeremiah living within the covenant with of God was like unconscious competence. People know and are aware and live their lives in that covenantal relationship. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

It is similar for the followers of Jesus. Their lives are lived conscious of their losing life in order to follow Jesus: dying with him and rising with him, turning from this life to eternal life, serving Jesus.

“Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. (John 12:25-27)

For the Christian there is no relaxation from this life. We are always “Christian” and, as Paul put it, “praying without ceasing”.

This is sometimes called ‘habitual recollection’. This doesn't mean that we are consciously thinking about God and Jesus 100% of the time all day, all night. It can be likened to marriage. If a married couple only think of the other person all the time, they wouldn't get a lot done. But a healthy marriage relationship affects every other part of life. Whether at home or at work or pursuing recreational activities the marriage relationship affects attitudes towards others, awareness of time and actions.

We can also develop 'habitual recollection' in our approach to fair trade and ethical shopping. Whenever we buy coffee or clothes or any item, we can be constantly asking who made this, how much were they paid, what conditions did they work under. Eventually this thinking will be automatic. Like the law with Jeremiah, we won't need to be taught, we will just know.

This form of habitual recollection is an aspect of being a follower of Jesus, where our relationship with Jesus affects every part of our life, including the way we shop.

One way of living out the dying to self, as Jesus mentions in John 12, is to forget about ourselves when we shop. The best gift givers are those who think about the person they are purchasing the gift for. They ask questions like, "What would they like?" rather than "What would I like?", even if it's not something you would buy for yourself. It's as if we are dying to self as we make a purchase to please the recipient. There is also the other side of the purchasing transaction. As well as thinking about the person to receive the gift we can think about the people in the supply chain which resulted in that product being on the shelf or the rack. We die to self in order that Jesus might be glorified. And Jesus is glorified when workers are treated well as they produce the goods we purchase.

Prayer

Loving God,
As our journey through Lent draws to a climax in Jerusalem,
Form us as people of habitual prayer,
As people of habitual Fair Trade purchasers
So that Your name will be glorified.

Show us ways we can die to self,
In part through the goods we buy,
So that Your name will be glorified.

Resources to assist our 'habitual recollection' when it comes to shopping

Two useful guides to help your shopping:

Shop Ethical

<https://www.ethical.org.au/3.4.2/>

Baptist World Aid

<https://baptistworldaid.org.au/resources/ethical-fashion-guide/>

Palm / Passion Sunday 28.3.21

The Liturgy of the Palms

- [Mark 11:1-11](#)
- or [John 12:12-16](#)
- [Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#)

Reflection

Palm Sunday and beyond

Every time Churches that use the traditional Communion or Eucharist liturgy, they repeat part of the Palm Sunday reading based on Mark 11:9:

Holy, holy, holy Lord ,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.**

Hosanna in the highest.

I wonder how many people who repeat those words Sunday by Sunday consciously think of where the words come from. It is not necessary to recall the origin of these words for them to be a genuine expression of our praise of God. Shouted specifically by the Palm Sunday crowd as Jesus entered Jerusalem, we make them ours as we worship.

By Friday the words of 'Hosannah' had changed to 'crucify'. I'm sure Jesus knew what lay ahead. He knew that he could still turn around and retreat to the security of the carpenter's bench back in Nazareth. But he forged ahead, bravely confronting the authorities and those who had twisted the message of God which landed him on the cross on Good Friday.

Beyond the agonizing death of the cross, next Sunday we will celebrate the joyous Resurrection of Jesus Christ and celebrate His living presence with us.

We will again shout

Hosanna in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Jesus is always coming in the name of the Lord. He comes in worship, he comes in the silence. He comes in our daily activities and as Henri Nouwen said 'Jesus comes to us in the poor, the sick, the dying, the prisoners, the lonely, the disabled, the rejected. There we meet him, and there the door to God's house is opened for us.'

We even meet Jesus through the way we purchase various goods.

How have we been changed by the experience of Lent with the anticipation of Easter?

Perhaps your Church might want to demonstrate a commitment to the world through Fair Trade by becoming a Fair Trade Faith Group.

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for this journey through Lent with Jesus.
As we continue on through Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day,
Help us to experience afresh the Risen Christ in our lives and our Churches.
Guide us as we respond to your great love for us
With our love for you
And for the neighbours both seen and unseen.

Resources

See the Fairtrade Australia leaflet 'Fair Trade at you Faith Group'

Visit the Fair Trade Association Website Get Involved / Communities / Faith Groups

www.fta.org.au

Also a link to FTA members.

Thinking towards fish on Good Friday.

Where does your fish come from? Be Slavery Free have provided good resources for assisting us to determine how we can ensure a slavery free supply chain for our fish.

[https://beslaveryfree.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?
u=0db0a3d279fc07bdaa8e5e544&id=8c75b31700&e=6434b6d4d6](https://beslaveryfree.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0db0a3d279fc07bdaa8e5e544&id=8c75b31700&e=6434b6d4d6)

