

Reflections on Lent by Bishop Dr Titus Chung:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Grace and peace to you and your family from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

We are about to enter the season of Lent which is a period of 40 days (not including Sundays) from Ash Wednesday (2 March) to the Saturday before Easter (16 April). Lent has traditionally been the season when Christians are encouraged to engage in soul searching and repentance. In the early church, the season was also meant to be a time of preparation for Easter, when Christians re-dedicated themselves to the Lord and for new believers to be baptized.

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when traditionally Christians receive the symbolic gesture of the imposition of ashes on their foreheads reminding them that “you are dust and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:19) This serves as a good reminder of our real human condition, our finiteness and also helps us refrain from any form of grandiosity. The ashes marked on the forehead takes us back to the Old Testament teaching of covering oneself with ashes. This is an outward sign of an inward repentance and remorse as one becomes aware of one’s sinfulness.

The rhythm of Lent consists of fasting or abstaining from our usual way of life that can cover up what is really going on within us, spiritually. When we allow some of the comfort and trappings of our lives to be put aside, then what is in the heart - the sinful desires and behaviour – soon become apparent. Therefore, Lent gives us the opportunity to honestly lay our sinful desires and behaviour before the Lord and ask for forgiveness and the grace to live differently.

“I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.”

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing you have made
and forgive the sins of all who are penitent:
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may obtain of you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
(Collect for Ash Wednesday in The Book of Common Prayer 1979)

Revised Safe Management Measures: We look forward to larger congregational sizes at Sunday worship services based on the released “Updated SMMs for Religious Activities”. This means that event size limits and zoning requirements will be removed. However, the recent surge in Covid-19 cases does not augur well for everyone. As requested, NCCS will be

organising a virtual meeting for pastors and church leaders to seek further clarification regarding the amended protocols and their implementation dates. In a separate email, all churches will receive an invitation to register for the meeting.

Making Sense of the Metaverse: On 28 October 2021, Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, announced that his social media company hopes to create the metaverse. This announcement has sparked vigorous discussion on the ramifications of the metaverse on individuals and society. What is the metaverse? What are its potentials and pitfalls? In a Pulse article, Ethos Theological and Research Advisor, Dr Roland Chia reflects on these questions. See [Navigating the Metaverse'](#)

NCCS would like to thank you for your positive feedback on its monthly e-newsletter. You may wish to share the e-newsletter with other church leaders and members of your congregation for their information.