

REVD MARK'S DAILY DEVOTIONALS #292 23RD – 27TH FEBRUARY 2026

MONDAY

AS WE READ REVD CANON MARK'S DEVOTIONAL, LET US CONSIDER THE GENTLE BUT UNSETTLING INVITATION OF LENT: TO ALLOW GOD BEYOND THE POLISHED SURFACES OF OUR LIVES AND INTO THE ROOMS WE WOULD RATHER KEEP CLOSED.

23rd February – Morning all... Are you a bit like me? When someone texts, “We’ll pop round in half an hour,” there’s that sudden surge of energy. Cushions get fluffed at record speed. Post gets shoved into a drawer. The random pile of “I’ll deal with that later” disappears into a cupboard that nobody is allowed to open. And then there’s always that room. You know the one. The room you quietly close the door on and hope no one says, “Oh, can I just use...?” We laugh about it. But if we’re honest, we live a bit like that spiritually too. There are parts of our lives we’re happy for people to see. The Sunday version. The capable version. The “I’m fine, thanks” version. The steady leader. The dependable one. And then there are the closed rooms. The insecurity we don’t talk about. The resentment we rehearse in the car. The prayer we stopped praying because it felt unanswered. The habit we excuse. The tiredness we won’t admit. Lent has a way of walking quietly down the hallway of our hearts... and stopping outside those doors. And here’s the uncomfortable part, it invites us to hand God the key. “Search me, O God, and know my heart... see if there is any offensive way in me.” (Psalm 139:23–24) That’s a dangerous prayer. Because once you pray it, you’re not asking God to admire the tidy lounge. You’re inviting Him into the cluttered spare room. Lent isn’t about spiritual spring-cleaning so we can impress God. It’s about opening the door so He can breathe life back into rooms that have grown stale. Let’s not rush past the discomfort today. If something surfaces, a memory, an attitude, a nudge, don’t shut the door quickly. Let Him in. Because the God who searches you is the same God who leads you. And He never enters a room to shame you. Only to restore what you thought had to stay hidden.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

TUESDAY

TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL INVITES US TO REFLECT ON WHY WOUNDS CLING SO TIGHTLY, AND HOW THE MERCY REVEALED AT THE CROSS CALLS US TO A DIFFERENT WAY OF REMEMBERING AND RELEASING.

24th February – Morning all... My wife frequently says to me “you just don’t listen”. I, of course, am convinced my short-term memory is getting worse. I can walk into a room and completely forget why I’m there. I can start a sentence and lose it halfway through. And yet, strangely, I can remember, in remarkable detail, something someone said years ago that hurt me. Isn’t that interesting? We forget the shopping list. We forget appointments. But we don’t forget the tone of that comment. The moment we felt dismissed, overlooked, betrayed. It’s easier to critique than to forgive. Easier to remember wounds than to release them. Holding onto it can feel like holding onto justice. If we let it go, it feels like we’re saying it didn’t matter. But it did matter. It hurt. It left a mark. And yet, as we journey through Lent, we are walking towards the cross, and the cross confronts us with mercy we did not deserve. “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36) That sounds gentle and poetic until there’s a real person attached to it. A real name. A real memory. Because mercy costs. When Jesus chose forgiveness, He wasn’t excusing a minor inconvenience. He was absorbing betrayal, denial, injustice, cruelty. And still He extended mercy. Here’s the truth: resentment is heavy. And most of the time, we are the ones carrying it. But the cross invites us to put it down. Not because the wound was small. But because His mercy is greater. And when we finally loosen our grip, we discover something unexpected, mercy doesn’t just free the other person - it frees us.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

WEDNESDAY

REVD MARK REMINDS ME OF THE TIME I CONFIDENTLY SET OF TO THE CREMATORIUM TO OFFICIATE AT A FUNERAL. WHEN NEARLY THERE, REVD MARK RANG ME ABOUT ANOTHER ISSUE AND ALERTED ME THAT I WAS HEADING TOWARD THE WRONG CREMATORIUM! PANIC! ACTUALLY, I MADE IT IN TIME, JUST ABOUT. I NOW DOUBLE CHECK WHERE I AM GOING.

25th February – Morning all, here’s a question for you, have you ever driven confidently in completely the wrong direction? Not hesitating. Not unsure. Absolutely certain you’re on the right road, until a sign calmly tells you the place you’re heading for is actually behind you. In that moment, we can argue with the sign. Blame the sat nav. Pretend we meant to go this way. Or we can do the simple, slightly humbling thing - turn around. That’s repentance. When Jesus said, “Repent, for the kingdom

of heaven has come near" (Matthew 4:17), He wasn't calling people to grovel. He was inviting them to reorient. To stop heading one way and begin heading another. Repentance isn't humiliation. It's honesty. It's noticing that the attitude you've defended is hardening you. That the habit you've excused is shaping you. That the distance you feel from God didn't happen overnight, it happened one small turn at a time. And here's the grace in it, God doesn't stand at the side of the road shaking His head. He meets us in the turning. Every time we reorient our heart toward Him, we'll find He is already near. Repentance isn't about looking back in regret. It's about choosing a better direction.
Revd Canon Mark Spiers

THURSDAY

WE ALL WALK THROUGH SEASONS THAT LEAVE SUBTLE MARKS ON THE HEART. REVD MARK'S DEVOTIONAL OFFERS A MOMENT TO COME BEFORE GOD WITH HONESTY AND LET HIM DO THE GENTLE, HEALING WORK ONLY HE CAN DO.

26th February – Morning all... Have you noticed how easy it is to become a little harder than you used to be? Not dramatic. Not cold-hearted. Just... less soft. Maybe you don't get your hopes up the way you once did. Maybe you don't pray with quite the same expectancy. Maybe you hold back a little in relationships because experience has taught you that not everything works out the way you planned. Life has a way of doing that. Disappointment doesn't usually shatter us in one moment, it settles in layers, over time, something forms. A kind of inner protection. We tell ourselves we're just being realistic. Wiser. More measured. But if we're honest, sometimes what's happened is that our hearts have grown a little guarded. A little less tender. That's why this promise feels so personal: "I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26) God doesn't say, "Fix your heart." He doesn't say, "Try harder to feel." He says, I will remove... I will give. Lent is an invitation to let Him gently point out where we've grown hard. Not to expose us, but to restore us. A soft heart can feel more, and yes, that means it can be hurt. But it also means it can love, hope, worship, and trust again. Maybe the prayer today is simple and honest: "Lord, I didn't mean to grow hard. But if I have, would You make me tender again?" Because the God who raises the dead is still in the business of bringing hearts back to life.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

FRIDAY

I WAS THERE TO WITNESS THE BAPTISM REVD MARK REFERS TO - AMAZING! (CRAIG REVEL HORWOOD FASHION). HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND

27th February – Morning all... This week I've had the privilege of baptising an adult who has just changed their name. Even writing that feels significant. A new name. A new beginning. They haven't had the easiest start in life. There's been instability. Addiction. Ridicule. Being laughed at more than encouraged. And in beautifully human fashion, they even arrived late for their own baptism. Part of me smiled at that. Because if we're honest, that detail says something about all of us. We don't arrive at grace polished and punctual. We arrive flustered. Carrying history. Carrying baggage. Carrying stories we wish were different. Have you ever noticed how quickly we adjust to carrying heavy things? At first it feels overwhelming. The stress keeps us awake. The guilt churns in our stomach. Regret replays itself in quiet moments. But after a while, you get used to it. You function. You smile. You answer emails. You preach, lead, parent, work. And somewhere along the way, you start calling it "normal." "This is just life." "It's fine I'm managing." But managing isn't the same as being free. We carry shame like it's part of our personality. We carry guilt long after forgiveness has been offered. And rarely do we stop to ask whether we were ever meant to carry it at all. As the water was poured and the words were spoken, something shifted. Not theatrically. Not loudly. Just deeply. There was a dignity about them that had nothing to do with their past and everything to do with God's presence. You could sense the Holy Spirit drawing a line between what had been and what now is. It brought to mind these words: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here." (2 Corinthians 5:17) That's what baptism declares. And that's what Lent prepares us for. Lent invites us to stop pretending we're just coping. To lay down what we've normalised. To let Christ carry what we have been dragging behind us for years. It invites us to believe that the past may explain us, but it does not own us. Watching them leave the church, I was reminded that grace does not require a tidy backstory. It requires surrender. And God is still in the business of giving people a new name, a new identity, and a future not defined by what they've carried, but by who carries them now.

Revd Canon Mark Spiers