



Greetings Friends,

There is a little-known “fact” that there are only 46 weeks in the year, as the other 6 are “Lent”. I’m sorry, it is a simple joke, which probably causes you to chuckle or groan.

And as you read this reflection, we will already be travelling in the Christian season of Lent, an annual reminder to us to prepare our hearts for Easter. Perhaps a time to remind ourselves of Jesus as he fasted in the desert for 40 days and nights, being tempted by Satan. Perhaps a time of self-examination and pausing, breathing and making space for God.

Overlooking Abergavenny is the solitary hill of Skirrid Fawr. It is scarred with a rockfall to the north of it’s ridge, which gives it a distinctive appearance. At its summit, the ordnance survey map suggests the remains of a hermit’s cell, and local legend links this with the nearby Llanthony Abbey, deep in the Black Mountains. It has a bleak landscape, with no cover when the Welsh rain clouds hit. For me, it’s a “thin silence”, or a place of “thin”ness between heaven and earth. I wonder if you know places like this? Places where you are more aware of God’s presence.

And just as climbing the Skirrid takes me away from the distractions of life, I wonder if the period of Lent can help us do the same. Sometimes by making room for God may mean we have to give up something for a while. Will it be the physicality of chocolate or caffeine, shifting our dependency towards God? Or will it be social media, tv or the quietening mobile notifications – removing the unnecessary noises of life to hear God’s voice?

It’s a simple shift in our being, about letting go of what weighs us down and being open to what lifts us up. I hope it gives us the freedom to be in the present moment, rather than time travelling to the past or worrying about the future. This is the only moment that we have, the eternal now (as its sometimes called).

And in all this, I hope we can all Pause, Breathe and Make space for God this Lenten period.

*Every blessing*

*Jimmy*