

TO BE ON EARTH THE HEART OF GOD



KIT

**OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART PARISH
St John the Apostle - Kippax ACT
St Thomas Aquinas - Charnwood ACT
FEBRUARY 2026**

Time for Reflection

A Lenten Invitation to the Naked Truth

“Did you ever look inside yourself and see what you are not?”

– Flannery O’Connor

Lent has a way of asking uncomfortable questions. It invites us to slow down, to become quieter, and to look within. And when we do, we may discover something unsettling: that what appears polished and presentable on the outside may not be so graceful within.

It is easy enough to notice physical flaws—our own and others’. A blemish, a wrinkle, a limp. These are visible to the ordinary eye. But Lent concerns itself with another kind of sight: the eye of the spirit. And that eye sees differently. It notices the subtle distortions of the heart—resentment disguised as righteousness, pride masked as competence, fear dressed up as control.

Strangely, we are often experts at spotting these “spiritual deformities” in others. We can name impatience, hypocrisy, or hardness of heart from a distance. We may even call it “naked truth” or “just being realistic.” But to recognise those same distortions in ourselves—that is a different and far more painful journey.

To see oneself clearly requires courage. It means letting go of our carefully constructed image. It means allowing God to gently expose what we would rather keep hidden. It is, as Edna Hong describes in *Living Lent*, a descending path—a long road snagged with thorns. No wonder Lent lasts forty days. The journey to truth is not quick. It resists shortcuts.

Yet this descent is not meant to humiliate us. It is meant to heal us. At the end of the Lenten path, we do not find a mirror that condemns us.

We find a Cross. We stand before the broken Body crowned with thorns. And there, in that silent presence, something shifts. The One who sees us completely—without varnish, without disguise—does not turn away in disgust.

He looks with love.

The Cross reveals two truths at once: the seriousness of our sin and the even greater seriousness of God's mercy. It tells us that what is twisted can be straightened, what is dwarfed can grow, what is crippled can be restored.

Lent, then, is not about morbid self-examination. It is about truthful love. It is about allowing the light of Christ to shine into the corners of our hearts—not to shame us, but to free us.

Perhaps this season we might pray for the grace to look within with gentleness rather than harshness.

To ask, not “How bad am I?” but “Lord, what in me longs to be made whole?” To trust that whatever we discover, we will not stand alone.

For at the end of the long, thorn-lined road stands Love itself—arms outstretched.

A Lenten Prayer

Lord Jesus,
you who see me completely
and love me still,

give me courage this Lent
to look within with
honesty and gentleness.
Where my heart is hardened,
soften it.

Where I am small in spirit,
enlarge me.

Where I hide behind
appearances,
lead me into truth.

As I stand before your Cross,
crowned with thorns
and broken for love,
teach me that nothing in me
is beyond your mercy.

Walk with me along the long
road of Lent,
until what is graceless in me
is reshaped by grace,
and what is wounded
is made whole in you.

Amen.

EDITOR'S NOTES

February was a full and grace-filled month in the life of our parish community.

On Sunday 1 February, Fr Chris McPhee MSC facilitated a Ministry Day for parishioners, particularly those involved in our liturgical ministries. It was a valuable opportunity for reflection, formation, and renewal in service.

On 2 February, we celebrated the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. The blessing of candles — which will be used throughout the coming year — is always a beautiful and symbolic part of this liturgy, reminding us that Christ is the Light of the World.

A significant moment in our parish journey occurred on 14 and 15 February when Archbishop Christopher Prowse and the MSC Provincial Superior, Fr Stephen Hackett MSC, formally blessed the new parish of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, uniting the communities of St John the Apostle and St Thomas Aquinas. These celebrations marked an important step in our shared future.



We warmly welcomed Br Daniel Magadia MSC on 16 February. We pray that his time among us will be rich in grace and mutual blessing. You can get to know Daniel on page 8.

Parents gathered on 17 February for the Sacrament of Penance formation session as their children prepare to receive this sacrament on 18 and 19 March at St John the Apostle Church and on 19 March at St Thomas Aquinas Church. We hold these families in prayer during this important time of preparation.

Our Lenten journey began with the celebration of Ash Wednesday on 18 February. Lent invites us into prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

Time, Talent and Treasure forms were distributed during February, inviting parishioners to prayerfully discern how they might share their gifts in the liturgical and pastoral life of our parish, particularly during this Lenten season of renewal.

On Friday 27 February, we celebrated the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, followed by a catered lunch. This special gathering is featured on page 9.

Over three days, from 27 February to 1 March, many parishioners participated in the Lenten retreat ***Meeting Christ in Our Deepest Need***, facilitated by Greg Sunter. It was a meaningful opportunity for spiritual reflection and growth. Br Daniel's msc reflection is on page 13.


As we move into March, we continue our Lenten pilgrimage together. By the end of the month, we will enter into the sacred days of the Easter Triduum – the heart of our liturgical year.

We appreciate parishioners contributions to KIT - check out page 19.

Blessings Marian



The simple things



This wondrous earth and sky and sea
bestow their wealth to make us free,
the graceful flight of little birds
saying love in some unspoken words.
Such beauty makes the soul resound
where health and happiness abound.
The simple things in life are free.

A ladybird upon a stalk,
a baby who begins to talk,
a nod across a crowded hall,
a knowing look, a kindly call,
a cockcrow in the early morn
as from our slumbers we are torn.
The simple things in life are free.

The simple things in life are free:
the rose, the daisy and sweet pea,
the finch, the robin and the wren,
the skylark's song that comes back again,
the music of a mountain stream,
the ripples that just make you dream.
The simple things in life are free!

Eamonn Murtagh



A fractured vase

Sometimes we're lost,
as the idol-worshipping Israelites
once were in the desert,
travelling in circles.
For if we reject the gift of faith
or lead lives without ideals
and a reason why,
we're no more than nomads
wandering under
a starless sky.

Is perfection possible
in this life?

At times, by God's grace,
but since humanity's first fall
not enduringly,
for each of us
is a fractured vase,
a broken vessel.

And yet we've been given a flower
whose fragrance is eternal,
the Son who poured out his blood
and the Spirit
for our restoration,
he who is the bridge to heaven,
the beloved
sent by our Father.

Shane Murtagh

Getting to know Br. Daniel Magadia msc



When is your birthday?

My birthday is the 24th of November 1992.

Can you tell us a bit about your family/background?

I was born in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines. I am the eldest of two boys. My parents are both dentists. In 2007, we moved to Adelaide. It was in Henley Beach where my family first encountered the MSC and the Antioch Youth Movement, both of which made an enormous impact on our faith.

How long have you been an MSC?

I wanted to be a priest when I was a little boy, but that faded away as I approached adolescence.

Growing up in an MSC parish, I've noticed something special about the MSCs, especially their joy and sense of humour. It rekindled the vocation I thought was already snuffed out. After much discernment, I joined the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in January 2019. I made my first profession in December 2020.

Do you have any favourite hobbies or pastimes?

I enjoy cooking, trying new dishes, and exploring new cuisines. Another hobby is playing board and card games.

What is an inspiring quote or scripture that you like?

"Trust in the slow work of God." (Teilhard de Chardin SJ)

"We love because God first loved us." (1 John 4:19)



*Anointing Mass Lunch
27 February 2026*



Shirley celebrated her 90th birthday!

MENTAL HEALTH ● MINISTRY

**LOVE – THE ORGANISING PRINCIPAL OF OUR LIVES**

Much of modern life trains us to trust the mind above all else. We are encouraged to analyse, justify, explain, and make sense of our lives as if clarity alone were the cure for distress. Yet many people discover, often through exhaustion or pain, that understanding something intellectually does not always bring peace.

The heart perceives meaning before language. It recognises when something is true, even when that truth comes at a cost. It senses when a path is life-giving, even if it is unfamiliar or unsettling.

Mental health, at its deepest level, is not merely about managing symptoms or controlling thoughts. It is about coherence – an inner alignment where what we think, feel, and choose are not at war with one another. When we ignore the intelligence of the heart, this coherence fractures. We may look functional on the outside while feeling divided, numb, or quietly overwhelmed within.

The intelligence of the heart is relational. It notices subtle inner movements: tightening and release, warmth and resistance, attraction and unease. These sensations are not signs of weakness or irrationality; they are forms of information. The heart gathers what the mind alone cannot hold – memory, desire, grief, hope, and compassion – and weaves them into a wisdom that is lived rather than argued.

From a mental health perspective, learning to listen to the heart restores agency. Anxiety often arises when we override inner truth in order to meet expectations or avoid discomfort. Depression can emerge when the heart's longings are silenced for too long. Healing begins not by forcing change, but by creating enough safety to feel what is already present.

In the Gospels, Jesus consistently lives from this heart-intelligence.

- He is moved with compassion before he acts.
- He perceives faith in a touch, truth in a question, hunger in a crowd.
- His responses flow not from urgency or fear, but from deep attunement – to the Father and to the human heart.
- He teaches not by winning arguments, but through presence, story, and encounter.

To live from the intelligence of the heart requires trust. It asks us to slow down enough to feel what is real. To tolerate not-knowing while something more truthful forms within us. To allow our actions to arise not from compulsion or self-criticism, but from coherence – where love becomes the organising principle of our lives.

In this way, mental health is not about becoming someone else. It is about becoming more fully oneself, anchored in love.



Loving God, draw us into wholeness—not by changing who we are, but by helping us become our truest selves, anchored always in your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.



The Baptism of Jesus

"The literal sense is not to be confused with the "literalist" sense to which fundamentalists are attached. It is not sufficient to translate a text word for word in order to obtain its literal sense. One must understand the text according to the literary conventions of the time. When a text is metaphorical, its literal is not that which flows from a word to word translation (eg "Let your lions be girt" Lk 12:35), but that which corresponds to the metaphorical use of these terms ("Be ready for action"). When it is the question of a story, the literal does not necessarily imply belief that the facts recounted actually took place, for a story need not belong to the genre of history but be instead a work of imaginative fiction.

...One arrives at this sense by means of a careful analysis, making use of all the resources of literary and historical research, with a view of defining the literal sense of the biblical texts with the greatest possible accuracy. To this end, the study of ancient literary genres is particularly necessary."

The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church ,
1993, pp78-79

The stories of the Baptism of Jesus as presented by each of the evangelists include a selection of terms such as: the heavens opened; saw the Holy Spirit descend on him in the shape of a dove; heard a voice saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on you"; he came up from the water or came out of the water. John's account, written some sixty years later with the hindsight of post resurrection insight, has John the Baptist saying, 'I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest in the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yest, I have seen him and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.' (Jn 1:29-34)

These terms point to a theophany; a showing; the realisation of Yahweh's presence in a very human event...an event expressing a decision, a commitment, an insight, a turn-around, a 'conversion from' to a 'conversion to'. A very human development. Jesus was, is fully human: learning, developing, questioning, observing, feeling, relating, challenging, correction. And suffering from rejection, being spied upon and abandonment. Paul in his letter to the Philippians puts this so clearly when he offers a hymn:

Let this same mind be in you
that was in Christ Jesus:
who, being in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself taking the form
of a slave being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form
he humbled himself and became obedient
to the point of death -
even death on a cross.

(Phil. 2:6-8)

"Paul is reminding us that when we look at Jesus we are seeing how God chose to reveal himself in human form. It is precisely of this fact that Jesus chose to live and to die in the manner which Paul goes on to describe."

(Fallon M. 'New Testament Letters, St Paul, p615)

To be continued in March edition of KIT

By Brian Mahoney, 2026



“Meeting Christ in Our Deepest Need” A reflection by Daniel Magadia

“Meeting Christ in Our Deepest Need” was the theme of the Lenten retreat. However, Greg explained in the beginning that it is more the other way around. It is Christ meeting us in our need. The group reflected on this by picking a picture from a pile that spoke to where we were. Divided into small groups, we shared about our cards.

Over the next three sessions, we explored how Jesus meets us through reflecting on poetry and three Gospel passages. We started with Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman. Despite her past, Jesus met her without condemnation. A question we pondered was what we were thirsting for. What gave us life? A challenging invitation also presented itself, to leave old ways towards renewal.

The next was centred on the healing of the man born blind. Jesus meets me, though trapped in my own version of blindness. It can get surprisingly hard to heed the voice calling to open my eyes. The call then is to be courageous and open, to leave the familiar and comfortable and trust God.

The raising of Lazarus was the focus of the last session. A couple of lines struck me. First, was Martha’s frustration when she said to Jesus: “If you had been here”, which reminded me of moments of frustration in prayer. Another was “Jesus wept”. For me, this was an invitation to embrace vulnerability and one's emotions. Through the passage, the group also reflected on being bound and being free from the bandages, leading to being free to really live.

Through the three stories, Jesus indeed meets us where we are, whether it is our mess, our darkness, or our own entanglement. He approaches us with love and gentleness. However, Jesus does not leave us in the same state he met us.



Greg Sunter

From: <https://www.wholehearted.com.au/about/>

The humility and fidelity of Ruth

I am an unashamed fan of the Old Testament with its rich and varied testimony concerning God's constant and sacrificial love for a helpless humankind. Especially relevant in the devotions of this time of Lent. The Book of Ruth derives its name from its principal character.

This young woman was a Moabitess, an outsider, vulnerable due to the death of her Israelite husband, dependent on a kindly mother-in-law, Naomi, in a time of famine.

Ruth makes the difficult choice to stay with Naomi and travel to Naomi's homeland unsure of the reception she will receive. The book emphasises the sovereign activity of God's providential working in the lives of all people. An ongoing work of God in our day and age. Devotionally the book provides several analogies between the work of the kinsman-redeemer of ancient Israel and that of Jesus Christ our mediator. Importantly, it is also an exciting story of true romance! As well, the Book of Ruth instructs us in personal morality and a concern for the needs of others. During this time of Lent, I encourage our community to read once again this short, but dynamic, book and be reminded that honour, graciousness and courtesy never go out of fashion.

Pam Connor



"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16)

BAPTISMS

For some years now, it has been our liturgical practice not to celebrate baptisms during Lent.

Lent is the Church's final and most intense period of purification and enlightenment for those journeying through the RCIA, a sacred preparation that finds its natural culmination at the Easter Vigil.

At the same time, throughout Lent the gathered Body of Christ turns inward to recall and reflect upon its own baptism, preparing to renew its baptismal promises with renewed faith and gratitude at Easter.



FUNERALS

As we walk the path toward Easter, we hold in our hearts those who have died, entrusting them once again to the compassionate love of Christ. In prayer, in quiet remembrance, and in the offering of the Eucharist, we commend them to God's mercy and give thanks for the gift they have been in our lives.

May this Lenten season be a time of hope for us all, as we await the promise of resurrection and the fullness of life in Christ.

Heart Spirituality

Mary Shares in the work of redemption

The life of Jesus is marked by three solemn periods:

His entry into the world,
His public mission,
and His death on the cross.

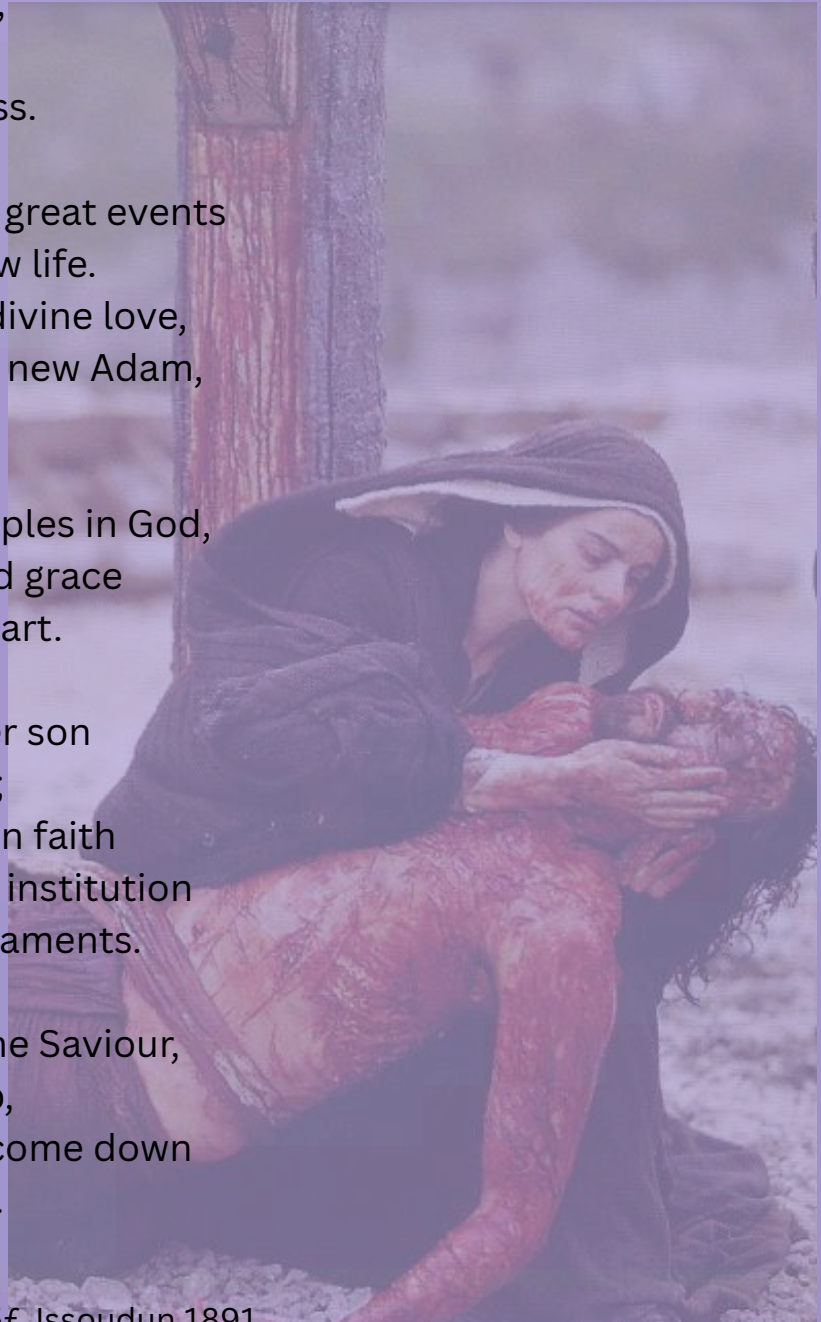
His Mother is associated with these great events
that bring about a whole new life.

She is there as the sacrament of divine love,
as the mysterious helpmate of the new Adam,
in a new creation.

She give birth on Calvary to all peoples in God,
made fruitful by the blood and grace
flowing from his Sacred heart.

At Cana she obtains from her son
the first of his miracles;
she establishes the Apostles in faith
and receives the assurance of the institution
of the eucharist and other sacraments.

She is going to carry to Hebron the Saviour,
still hidden in her womb,
causing the grace of salvation to come down
on the son of Elizabeth.



Jules Chevalier msc, OLSH, P 85f. Issoudun 1891

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved.....forever!

POPE LEO'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR MARCH

For disarmament and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.



<https://www.popesprayer.va/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/ING-PRAYER-INTENTIONS-OF-THE-HOLY-FATHER-2026-1.pdf>

Praying for Pope Leo *supporting him in his ministry*

Each of us have a hidden role in Pope Leo's mission, and that role is praying for the Pope every day. Praying for the Pope is a profound way to participate in the Church's mission and to express our communion with the Body of Christ.

Pope Leo needs the prayers and sacrifices of the people of God to help sustain him in his ministry. The fruitfulness of ministry is often born from the private, secret prayers of others.

Heavenly Father,
you give strength to those who hope in you
and call them to fearless courage.
Bless your servant, Pope Leo XIV,
with courage, fortitude, and faithful trust,
that he may lead your Church
with confidence in your abiding presence.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish – SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish is committed to safeguarding and upholding the dignity and rights of all our children and vulnerable people. We seek to empower children, their families and carers, and vulnerable people, to have a say, to be listened to, and to be protected. This approach is at the centre of all of our thinking and action.



PARISH SAFEGUARDING VOLUNTEERS

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Volunteer is to be an additional point of contact in the Parish on matters relating to the safeguarding of children, young and vulnerable people, complementing the roles of the Parish Priest and Parish Secretary. They can provide advice on how complaints can be made, and forward concerns, relating to the protection safeguarding of children, young and vulnerable people within the Parish to the Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding Manager.



Jenny McGee, Carl Madsen, and Marg Hourigan –
belconnenwest.safeguarding@cg.org.au

*We love to celebrate mass with the children and vulnerable people of our parish.
 Safeguarding and care is everyone's responsibility.*

Sunday Afternoon Readers - Parish Book Club

Our book club, the Sunday Afternoon Readers, meet on the 4th Sunday of every month at 3pm in the Parish Library at St John's Kippax.

We read a wide variety of books using the Read Around Canberra program offered by the ACT Libraries.

We would like to warmly welcome all new readers who are interested in joining!

Please contact Kirsty on kirsty.vera@cg.org.au for more information



What is KIT?

KIT, or Keeping in Touch, was born during the lockdown years of the COVID pandemic. It was also brought about due to the constant complaint that “nothing ever happens in the parish!” The magazine aimed to showcase the events, sacraments, and journey of St John the Apostle Parish, Kippax. Since merging with St Thomas Aquinas Parish, Charnwood, it now has extended its borders to celebrate what is happening across both churches.

What does it consist of?

KIT is a collection of memorabilia - it is articles, photos, poems, reflection and more. We encourage parishioners to write in or share their photography/artwork with the parish office so that they made be celebrated in our monthly Keeping in Touch magazine. Sometimes articles are modified or edited, especially if there is a space issue, but we aim to reproduce the feel and meaning behind the piece as faithfully as possible.

How can you contribute?

Please contribute your thoughts, words, images or other contributions to belconnenwest@cg.org.au as early in the month as possible. KIT is generally published in the first few days of the month, so anything that comes in late in the month may need to be pushed back to the next month.

We would really love to hear from you, so please share!



MARCH 2026



1	Sunday	Second Sunday of Lent
2	Monday	The Presentation of the Lord - the Blessings of Candles
3	Tuesday	
4	Wednesday	
5	Thursday	Gethsemane Thursday - prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
6	Friday	1 st Friday of the Month - Mass of the Sacred Heart - 9:30am Scripture Group - 10am Parish Library Meditation 5:15pm Parish Library
7	Saturday	
8	Sunday	Third Sunday of Lent Return Time Talent & Treasure forms to the Office
9	Monday	Canberra Day Public Holiday - Office Closed
10	Tuesday	Community Connections - 2:00pm Coffee Ichi Cafe Klppax
11	Wednesday	
12	Thursday	
13	Friday	Scripture Group - 10am Parish Library Meditation 5:15pm - Parish Library
14	Saturday	
15	Sunday	Fourth Sunday of Lent Community Connections 3:30pm Parish Library
16	Monday	Pins & Needles 7:15pm - Parish Library
17	Tuesday	
18	Wednesday	Sacrament of Penance - 6pm St John the Apostle Church, Kippax
19	Thursday	Sacrament of Penance - 6pm St Thomas Aquinas Church, Charnwood
20	Friday	Meditation 5:15pm - Parish Library Men's Group 6:00pm Parish Centre
21	Saturday	
22	Sunday	Fifth Sunday of Lent Sunday Afternoon Book Club - 3:00pm Parish Library
23	Monday	
24	Tuesday	Women's Breakfast 7:30am Bean Origin Cafe Belconnen
25	Wednesday	Friendship Group - 10:15am Parish Centre
26	Thursday	
27	Friday	Meditation 5:15pm - Parish Library Movie Night - 7:00pm Parish Library
28	Saturday	
29	Sunday	Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord
30	Monday	
31	Tuesday	