

# LENT REFLECTIONS 2025

## Week 2

*By Rev Petra Elsmore*

I wonder how many of you have boxes in your loft or garage or your spare room which you haven't opened since you have moved into your home?

Guy and I have been married for almost 18 years and some of the things that were put into boxes and into the loft when we moved into our first home together were left unopened for all these years. They moved from house to house with us, until recently when we decided to have a big clear out.



I wonder what makes us want to hold onto things for so many years, things that don't have even sentimental value but somehow we cannot part with them?

I remember as a little girl watching my grandma taking out big rags and giving them a really good clean, doing a proper big spring clean throughout the entire house, all the windows got washed, everything got dusted and cleaned, it just sparkled and it left us feeling quite uplifted.

Thank goodness for spring and warm sunny days, which somehow encourage us to open the garage doors and lofts and look through the long forgotten things that we can't even remember we owe. I am sure it is somehow part of the natural rhythm of seasons that we feel the urge to put our lives and our lofts in order as springs come, that we suddenly feel we should travel lightly.

When contemplating the big clear out, I came across this wonderful poem by Mary Oliver.

### STORAGE

When I moved from one house to another  
there were many things I had no room  
for. What does one do? I rented a storage  
space. And filled it. Years passed.  
Occasionally I went there and looked in,

but nothing happened, not a single  
twinge of the heart.

As I grew older the things I cared  
about grew fewer, but were more  
important. So one day I undid the lock  
and called the trash man. He took  
everything.

I felt like the little donkey when  
his burden is finally lifted. Things!  
Burn them, burn them! Make a beautiful  
fire! More room in your heart for love,  
for the trees! For the birds who own  
nothing—the reason they can fly.

The theme of decluttering is one, I am sure, we can all identify with, but it's not only in our cupboards, lofts, garages or storage units that clutter accumulates. It's in our hearts and minds as well. Lent is a wonderful time for us to have our own internal spring clean.

Fasting and prayer are practices, that help us to deal with the inner clutter, they help us to focus on what is good for us, on what matters, putting aside unnecessary distractions. What is it, that distracts you from what really matters? Can you put it aside?

When we get overwhelmed by our clutter, we can remember the words of St Paul, to help us get on the right path.

*7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, ..... 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (Philippians 3: 7-9a, 10)*

This is so beautifully expressed through the hymn All I Once Held Dear. Listen here:

### **Prayer**

Dear Lord, help us to stay focused on what really matters, so that rather than being preoccupied with our own 'clutter', we may be open to see the needs of others and grow in our faith and in the love and knowledge of you. Amen.

