



*Our Lady of Walsingham (24<sup>th</sup> September)*

**East Hendred Catholic Parish**

# **Food for the Journey**

**20<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

# NOTICEBOARD

## CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew is 01235 835038 or 07976 437979  
[aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

## THIS WEEK

Mass at 11.15am at St Mary's (also on Zoom) and 6pm (also on Facebook)  
Mass is livestreamed Monday to Friday on East Hendred Catholic Parish Facebook page. Use the link on [www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk)  
St Amand's children will come to Mass on Thursday at 10am. (No public).  
St Mary's will be open for prayer on Thursday, 2pm-3pm (now one hour).  
Masses next Sunday are at 11.15am and 6pm. Please e-mail [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) before Friday lunchtime to book.

## CHILDREN CELEBRATE

Our Team have produced resources, which are available as booklets and kits at the back of St Mary's, to collect on Sundays or Thursday 2pm-3pm. The Children's Liturgy Booklet and the activity sheet have been uploaded to the website [www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk)

### Other **Resources for 20 September**

Children's liturgy for Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

- [Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)
- A children's liturgy resource for Sunday 20 September. Download accompanying [illustration](#).
- [www.cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy](http://www.cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy)
- Children's liturgy general guidelines [\(doc, 59kb\)](#)

## MEDAILLE TRUST

The Medaille Trust is a UK-based charity founded by several Catholic Congregations. Its main aim is to bring restoration and freedom to victims of human trafficking. A message from 'Leanne and all at Medaille Trust':

**'Thank you and the Parish for your extremely kind donation to support our work. The gift will enable us to continue to provide the social, emotional, and spiritual support victims need to become survivors'**

## **MARY'S MEALS**

Mrs Ellery writes: 'St Amand's Catholic Primary School is raising money to feed 235 children for a whole school year at Redeemed Elementary & Junior High, Liberia. We have been hugely inspired by the book, *The Shed That Fed A Million Children*, by Magnus MacFarlane- Barrow (one to read!)

We would like to extend support for our project to East Hendred Catholic Parish and would appreciate donations from parishioners to enable us to reach our target of £3,737. The cost to feed one child daily in their place of education, costs only £15.90. Please share widely. The school are planning some sponsored events and will be fundraising to reach our target. You can access and donate on our project page on the link below, or Facebook.

[https://giving.marysmeals.org/en\\_gb/projects/qzol-the-love-we-feel-for-mary-s-meals](https://giving.marysmeals.org/en_gb/projects/qzol-the-love-we-feel-for-mary-s-meals)

This is what I wrote on our Project page-

'This year we want to send love from our small village school to theirs. We want each child to have a daily meal for a year, which will enable them to be happy and learn just like our children. We want the world to be a fairer place with hope for every child, who is created in the image of God. Mary's Meal's is fabulous!'

## **NEXT SUNDAY (27<sup>th</sup> September)**

The last Sunday in September, at St Mary's, is 'Thanksgiving for the Harvest'. Harvest conditions this year, locally, have not been easy but our perspective is that we live in a land of plenty and do not experience serious shortages. We are thankful to God our Creator and mindful of our responsibilities to others.

Meanwhile we continue to sustain in prayer and fellowship the congregation which normally gathers at St Patrick's, for whom 'Michaelmas' is a particular festival, because of the joint dedication to St Michael. How we miss the annual autumn BBQ: unfortunately it's very hard to socially distance sausages....

**Harvest Collection this year is to AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED.**

**To donate online, please go to <https://acnuk.org/>**

# East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Twenty-Fifth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time (A)  
20<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
Antiphons,  
Prayers and Readings**

**Our Lady of Walsingham (24<sup>th</sup> September)**

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## **Entrance Antiphon**

*Salus populi ego sum*

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord. Should they cry to me in any distress, I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

## **Collect**

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever

## **First Reading**

*Isaiah 55:6-9 (RSV)*

Seek the LORD while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;  
<sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.  
<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

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**Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18 R/ 18a**

**R/ The Lord is close to all who call him.**

I will bless you day after day  
and praise your name for ever and ever.  
The Lord is great and highly to be praised;  
his greatness cannot be measured. **R/**

The Lord is kind and full of compassion  
slow to anger, abounding in mercy.  
How good is the Lord to all,  
compassionate to all his creatures. **R/**

The Lord is just in all his ways,  
and holy in all his deeds.  
The Lord is close to all who call him,  
who call on him in truth. **R/**

**Second Reading**

*Philippians 1:20-24, 27 (RSV)*

Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. <sup>24</sup> But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.... <sup>27</sup> Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

**Alleluia**, alleluia.

Open our hearts, O Lord to accept the words of your Son. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel**

*Matthew 20:1-16 (RSV)*

At that time, Jesus said to the disciples, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; <sup>4</sup> and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. <sup>5</sup> Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. <sup>6</sup> And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup> They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' <sup>8</sup> And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the labourers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' <sup>9</sup> And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup> And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, <sup>12</sup> saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' <sup>13</sup> But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. <sup>15</sup> Am I not allowed to do what I choose

with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' <sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first last.'

### **Apostles' Creed**

**I BELIEVE** in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting. Amen.

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Receive with favour, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries. Through Christ our Lord.

### **Preface**

*(I De mysterio paschali et de populo Dei)*

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvellous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

### **Communion Antiphon**

*Tu mandasti mandata tua*

You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept; may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes. *cf Ps 119:4-5*

### **Prayer after Communion**

Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life. Through Christ our Lord.

## **Salve Regina**

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

## **Scripture Reading (Week 25 Year [ii])**

Monday	Proverbs 3:27-34	Luke 8:16-18
Tuesday	Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13	Luke 8:19-21
Wednesday	Proverbs 30:5-9	Luke 9:1-6
Thursday	Ecclesiastes 1:2-11	Luke 9:7-9
Friday	Ecclesiastes 3:1-11	Luke 9:18-22
Saturday	Ecclesiastes 11:9 - 12:8	Luke 9:43-45

### **HARVEST THANKSGIVING**

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15;  
2 Thessalonians 3:6-12, 16      Matthew 6:31-34

### **HOLY FATHER'S OCTOBER PRAYER INTENTION**

We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church.

### **THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED**

Geoff Cowan, John Castle, Daniel Cuevas, Rosalyn Millet, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Sr Catherine, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Angus Clark, Karen Greig, Kitty Teasdale, Mary Mc Nichol, Andrew Gunn, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol, Anne North, Christine Robinson

### **THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED**

Susannah Countess of Westmeath, James France, Albert Wheatley, James Bridger, Gertrude Keenex, William Castle, Kevin Barry, Edward Reavey, Fr Anthony Birrer, Jane Curley.

### **GIVING**

To help with supplying the Didcot Foodbank, contact Veronica Paget: [veronicapaget@hotmail.com](mailto:veronicapaget@hotmail.com) or leave suitable food outside her front door. [Jackymattam@btinternet.com](mailto:Jackymattam@btinternet.com) needs help with the poor locally.

### **MARY'S MEALS**

**Your help is sought with the school project to feed children in an African school. See also St Amand's Facebook page for details.**

### **BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary**

**Sort Code: 309304    Account Number: 00877183    To set up an SO or arrange Gift Aid, contact : [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)**

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### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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# FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

20<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020 Week 25[ii]

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## OVERVIEW OF THE WEEK

**TWO FEASTS** this week loom into view. On Monday we celebrate St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, which has its special readings, and on Thursday we celebrate Our Lady of Walsingham. Rather than interrupt the *lectio continua* (the successive reading of a book of Scripture), we shall use the first reading for Week 25 from Tuesday to Friday.

This year – though complicated by COVID – we have been taking part in **The God Who Speaks**, as requested by the Catholic Bishops. We have been paying particular attention to what Scripture says and trying to listen to what God is telling us through the words of Scripture. We have approached that, in this parish, in several small, but telling ways. At the beginning of the Church's Year we looked at St Matthew's Gospel, with a series of short articles, drawn from the website of the United States Catholic Bishops' Conference. We also had a Bible Study on Friday mornings – at first meeting in the Holy Family Room and then going 'on line'. That took us to the summer. Meanwhile, since the Lockdown began, we have been publishing these bulletins – daily until August and now weekly. It has been personally very helpful to me, and I hope to others too, as time has gone by, to pay particular attention to the First Reading at Weekday Mass, grappling with the Old Testament prophets, amongst other things.

This week we turn from our study of the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians to some Jewish Wisdom Literature. This genre is never far from us because, of course, the psalms are part of the Wisdom Literature. So we shall look briefly at the Book of Proverbs on Tuesday and Wednesday and then at two famous passages from Ecclesiastes on Thursday and Friday. Looming up the following week is the Book of Job, which is the Hebrew tradition at its most profound.

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# St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September

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**St Matthew**, also called Levi, was the son of Alphaeus. He was a tax collector for the Roman authorities, a responsibility which came with the opportunity to extort for personal gain. He was called by the Lord at Capernaum and is said to have travelled ultimately to Persia, or Ethiopia. Whichever his destination, he was martyred.

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## Collect

**O GOD**, who with untold mercy were pleased to choose as an Apostle, St Matthew, the tax collector, grant that, sustained by his example and intercession, we may merit to hold firm in following you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

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## Reading

*Matthew 9:9-13*

*The Call of Matthew*

<sup>9</sup> As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him.

<sup>10</sup> And as he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' <sup>12</sup> But when he heard it, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup> Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.'

## Reflection

**THE CALL** of Matthew in St Matthew's Gospel is set in an interlude between the second and third of three cycles of miracle stories. And it is St Matthew's Gospel that tells us that the name of the tax collector is 'Matthew'. The tax collector in the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke call him 'Levi'. In the tradition it has always been assumed that 'Matthew' and 'Levi' are one and the same person. It is also assumed, particularly in modern scholarship, that the ascription of the first Gospel to 'Saint Matthew' in the second century was possibly a way of securing apostolic authorship for what was written anonymously, however much by or at the behest of an apostle. The Gospel itself is heavily dependent on the Hebrew tradition. Called 'the Gospel for the Jews', from its authorship it is then assumed that Matthew began his apostolic work in the Holy Land.

The story of the Call of Matthew serves to illustrate Jesus' teaching that his mission is as a physician to sinners and not as a comfortable presence for the self-satisfied. The quotation, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice', is from Hosea 6:6, and, by inserting it into the incident as described by Mark, Matthew's Gospel emphasises that Jesus identifies with the tradition that justice is more important than religious ritual. We shall hear something similar tomorrow's reading from the Book of Proverbs. The remark is addressed to the Pharisees who refer to Jesus as a teacher but are puzzled that he associates himself with tax collectors – those who make their living out of extortion – and sinners – those who make their living out of immoral earnings.

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## Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September

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### Collect for Week 24

**O GOD**, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever

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## Reading

*Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13*

### *Various Proverbs*

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;

he turns it wherever he will.

<sup>2</sup> Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,

but the LORD weighs the heart.

<sup>3</sup> To do righteousness and justice

is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

<sup>4</sup> Haughty eyes and a proud heart,

the lamp of the wicked, are sin.

<sup>5</sup> The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance,

but everyone who is hasty comes only to want.

<sup>6</sup> The getting of treasures by a lying tongue

is a fleeting vapour and a snare of death....

<sup>10</sup> The soul of the wicked desires evil;

his neighbour finds no mercy in his eyes.

<sup>11</sup> When a scoffer is punished, the simple becomes wise;

when a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge.

<sup>12</sup> The righteous observes the house of the wicked;

the wicked are cast down to ruin.

<sup>13</sup> He who closes his ear to the cry of the poor

will himself cry out and not be heard.

## Reflection

**THE BOOK** of Proverbs gives us wisdom - practical, psychological, spiritual – enhancing the quality of life and contrasting behaving justly with doing evil. The Proverbs are wise sayings rather than simple catch phrases ('He who closes his ear to the cry of the poor will...not be heard' has more moral content than such simple catch phrases as 'a stitch in time saves nine' or 'too many cooks spoil the broth'. There are many sections in the Book of Proverbs, all of which come under the general heading 'The Proverbs of Solomon'. King Solomon (961-922BC), being famously wise, gathered round him clever and educated people, a group referred to by one scholar

as 'King's College, Jerusalem', which gives us an idea of the intellectual ferment of the Wisdom tradition. In today's passage we have the familiar emphasis of the more sophisticated view that 'righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice'. That would not have been a view unchallenged by the Temple priesthood. Presiding over society is a king whose good heart is a stream in the hand of the LORD who can turn it wherever he wills. It is some hand that can contain water flowing in different directions. Here again, I think we are hearing a moral point of view rather than a bit of social history.

## Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September

### Reading

*Proverbs 30:5-9*

*Give me neither poverty nor riches;  
feed me with the food that is needful for me*

<sup>5</sup> Every word of God proves true;  
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

<sup>6</sup> Do not add to his words,  
lest he rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

<sup>7</sup> Two things I ask of you;  
deny them not to me before I die:

<sup>8</sup> Remove far from me falsehood and lying;  
give me neither poverty nor riches;  
feed me with the food that is needful for me,

<sup>9</sup> lest I be full, and deny you,  
and say, "Who is the LORD?"  
or lest I be poor, and steal,  
and profane the name of my God.

### Reflection

'**THE WORDS** of Agur' is a collection of sayings designated as an 'oracle' which, in today's verses, seek to strike a proper attitude in our approach to God. The approach is one of dependency and trust, confident that the Word of the Lord needs nothing added to it. Agur is identified as a Massaite – a member of one of the Northern Arabian tribes – and so, interestingly, gathered in this Hebrew literature, amongst Hebrew sayings, are the

sayings of an outsider, one who we see is oriented towards God. In fact, verses 7-9, the second part of today's reading, are the only example of a prayer in the Book of Proverbs.

The Book of Proverbs, as a whole, presents us with an ongoing search for a life that is both abundant and fruitful. Human experience is viewed alongside the presence and activity of God in a way of which St John Henry Newman would appreciate. In *The Idea of a University* he has this to say:

**'We attain to heaven by using this world well, though it is to pass away; we perfect our nature, not by undoing it, but by adding to it what is more than nature and directing it towards aims higher than its own.'**

## **Our Lady of Walsingham**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September**

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**THE SHRINE** of Our Lady of Walsingham derives from a vision granted to the Lady Richeldis de Faverches. She was inspired to build a replica of the Holy House of Nazareth. A place of vibrant pilgrimage until its destruction in 1538, the Shrine was revived by Catholics in 1897 and by Anglicans in 1922. The Catholic Shrine, nowadays ranked as a basilica, has the mediaeval Slipper Chapel, a mile outside the village, together with a modern building in the style of a Norfolk brick barn. Originally, pilgrims would remove their slippers and walk the last mile barefoot. The Anglican Shrine, meanwhile, next door to the ruins of the former Abbey, is at the heart of the village. The jurisdiction of former Anglicans, known as 'The Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham', derives its patronage from what has become one of the foremost places of pilgrimage in the land.

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### **Collect**

**GRANT**, we pray, almighty God, that, as in the mystery of the incarnation the Blessed and ever-Virgin Mary conceived your Son in her heart before she conceived him in the womb: so we, your pilgrim people, rejoicing in her motherly care, may welcome him into our hearts and become a holy house fit for his eternal dwelling. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever

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## Reading

## *Ecclesiastes 1:2-11*

*All is vanity! There is nothing new under the sun*

Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,  
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

<sup>3</sup> What does man gain by all the toil  
at which he toils under the sun?

<sup>4</sup> A generation goes, and a generation comes,  
but the earth remains for ever.

<sup>5</sup> The sun rises and the sun goes down,  
and hastens to the place where it rises.

<sup>6</sup> The wind blows to the south,  
and goes round to the north;  
round and round goes the wind,  
and on its circuits the wind returns.

<sup>7</sup> All streams run to the sea,  
but the sea is not full;  
to the place where the streams flow,  
there they flow again.

<sup>8</sup> All things are full of weariness;  
a man cannot utter it;  
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,  
nor the ear filled with hearing.

<sup>9</sup> What has been is what will be,  
and what has been done is what will be done;  
and there is nothing new under the sun.

<sup>10</sup> Is there a thing of which it is said,  
"See, this is new"?

It has been already,  
in the ages before us.

<sup>11</sup> There is no remembrance of former things,  
nor will there be any remembrance  
of later things yet to happen  
among those who come after.

## Reflection

**THE SPEAKER** is Qoheleth, a name which does not otherwise occur in the Bible. It means 'gathered' and the word 'Ecclesiastes', from the Greek, suggests gathering. The participle in Hebrew, from which Qoheleth comes, is feminine, but we are told that he is 'David's son... king in Jerusalem' –

apparently King Solomon, he of the wise proverbs. It is clear from the style of the Hebrew that this is not Solomon's work but something from half a millennium or more later. But to ascribe things to Solomon is to file them under 'wisdom'. The key word, not only in today's passage, but in the whole book of Ecclesiastes is 'vanity', which happens 38 times. The argument is not nihilism or pessimism. We may be defeated by the timing of things, but we can learn to live in the present. We are reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 6:34:

**Take therefore no thought for the morrow:  
for the morrow shall take thought for the things of  
itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.**

The message of Qoheleth is that God is in charge. We cannot understand God. Therefore, we must simply fear God and trust in his ways. The view of God is not the personal one, where God has a name, too awesome to speak out loud. God here is *Elohim*, a more impersonal, generic name. Nothing new will ever happen and everything disappears without trace. We are left in need of the Gospel.

## Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September

### Reading

*Ecclesiastes 3:1-11*

*Everything has its time*

**3** For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

- <sup>2</sup> a time to be born, and a time to die;
- a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- <sup>3</sup> a time to kill, and a time to heal;
- a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- <sup>4</sup> a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
- a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- <sup>5</sup> a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
- a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- <sup>6</sup> a time to seek, and a time to lose;
- a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- <sup>7</sup> a time to rend, and a time to sew;
- a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

<sup>8</sup> a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.

<sup>9</sup> What gain has the worker from his toil?

<sup>10</sup> I have seen the business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. <sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time; also, he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

## Reflection

**THE OPENING** of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes is one of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament, one to which people often resort as they celebrate the rites of passage. In fact, like the 'vanity of vanities' passage, read yesterday, it is about us not being in charge. We are presented with a whole series of circumstances, some of which we delight in, others in which we are far from comfortable, but in few of which we have complete control. Some of the 'business that God has given [us] to be busy with' can become ends in themselves and it is only the antithesis – 'a time to mourn and a time to dance' – that keeps things in proportion and allows us to move on. Human wisdom does not allow us to know in advance who will succeed and who will fail. God 'has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.' Eternity gives us the perspective. Meanwhile, if everything is beautiful in its time, we need to enjoy life in the present, the very same message as we heard yesterday, in a second striking piece of poetry.