

DEANERY OF ST EDMUND CAMPION

ENGLISH MARTYRS—VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE PASTORAL AREA

www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish

Before Lent

31st-January – 6th February 2021



Candlemas

Reflection - *Septuagesima*

AT THIS time of year the Church Calendar is a little untidy. Between Advent and Candlemas – the Winter months – we think of the coming of Christ, his birth, and his presentation as a young child in the temple. When Spring comes – think Candlemas and snowdrops – we have already encountered the adult Jesus, preaching and healing, confronting the authorities, and we see him making his way to Jerusalem, there to suffer and to die. In a short space we seem to have progressed from Christmas to Easter, from Birth to Resurrection. There are inevitable difficulties, exploring thirty-three years in little over three months. So we have duplications and things out of chronological sequence.

An earlier version of our Calendar marked out the three Sundays before Lent as the '*-gesima*' Sundays. The first of these – *Septuagesima* – occurs this year on 31st January. Had we been observing that, we should be discontinuing the *Gloria* at Mass, burying the *Alleluia* until Easter, and putting on purple vestments already. This 'Greater Lent' is untidy in its own way: if *Septua-* means 'seventy', *Sexa-* means 'sixty', and *Quinqua-* 'fifty', you could be forgiven for taking terms literally and thinking that weeks last ten days. Nonetheless, it is not a bad idea to have a short season preparing for the onset of a thoughtful and considered Lent.

It is usual to see Candlemas as an old-fashioned signpost, one arm pointing back to Christmas, the other pointing forward to Easter. The Incarnation Cycle is followed by the Easter Cycle. Sometimes, because Easter is moveable, there is a gap between the end of one and the beginning of the other – an inconvenient week or two. That is one kind of untidiness. Another is what we have this year – the one ending two days after the other has started. These untidy details superficially remind us that the liturgical Calendar is organic – it has grown through the ages, and sometimes has needed to be pruned. But more profoundly we are aware that all these mysteries which we celebrate are with us always. They are timeless. So the Christ who comes at Christmas comes to us in the Holy Eucharist and will come at the end of time. The Risen Lord who will greet us on Easter Morning is the underlying reality on whom our faith has been based since our own baptism and the baptisms of those who have gone before us. As we have sought to experience the Word made Flesh in the Incarnation, let us now look forward to walking the Way of the Cross and so sharing in the glory of the Resurrection.

31st January – 7th February 2021

All masses live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendred

Sunday **FOURTH SUNDAY *Per Annum* (Year B)**
31st January **9.30am Mass** *Pro populo*
 Deuteronomy 18:15-20
 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 **Mark 1:21-28**

Monday
1st February **9.15am Mass**
 Hebrews 11:32-40 Mark 5:1-20

The Presentation of the Lord (CANDLEMAS)
2nd February **9.15am School Mass** *Pupils of St Amand's*
 Malachi 3:1-4 **Luke 2:22-40**

Wednesday *St Blaise, Bishop & Martyr*
3rd February **9.15am Mass** *RIP Hilda Balcombe 1953*
 Hebrews 12:1-7, 11-15 Mark 6:1-6

Thursday
4th February **10am Mass**
 Hebrews 12:18-19,21-24 Mark 6:7-13

Friday *St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr*
5th February **9.15am Mass**
 Hebrews 13:1-8 Mark 6:14-29

Saturday *SS Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs*
6th February *No Mass*
 Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21 Mark 6:30-34

Sunday **FIFTH SUNDAY *Per Annum* (Year B)**
7th February **9.30am Mass** *Pro populo*
 Job 7:1-4, 6-7
 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23 **Mark 1:29-39**

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

PARISH ADMINISTRATORS ON FURLOUGH

During February Maria Brown and Ma Lluisa Jarne will be on furlough once more, so that the parish can benefit from government help. The parish e-mail hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk will be monitored by Fr Andrew so no one in the parish should be affected by the furlough.

ST MARY'S ON LIVE-STREAM

Last Sunday (24th January) 264 people looked in from 118 addresses, with 118 staying around long enough to take part in the Mass. Homes with more than one person viewing help explain the largest figure.

VERSO L'ALTO - REACH THE HEIGHTS!

An Hour of Prayer and Praise

Bishop Philip invites you to join him and the Cathedral clergy online every Thursday 7.30 to 8.30 pm during lockdown to pray for safety, for the sick and for key workers, for the Diocese and for a speedy end to the pandemic. <https://www.portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk/live-mass.php>

CHURCH CLOSED

The churches in the parish are currently closed: for safety's sake, before accessing please check with Fr Andrew. In place of the scheduled Parish Pastoral Council Meeting on Wednesday 10th February, the Standing Committee will be convened, 8pm on Zoom that night, to monitor progress. Whilst St Mary's is closed, there are plans to repair the floor. Whilst St Patrick's is closed, we hope to re-hang the *baldacchino* securely.

LENTEN RETREAT: 'FINDING HOPE IN SCRIPTURE'

Sr Hyacinthe Defos du Rau, OP, Formation for Mission Team Leader
Department for Evangelisation, Tel: 0150681874, writes:

Every Monday evening during Lent, for six weeks, at 7.30pm we will discover aspects of the virtue of hope from six different Bible passages, so that we may grow in hope in these difficult times, and find ways to share our hope with others. Our reflection will be followed by a time of live-streamed adoration and Compline with the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph. Register here to participate:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZETc-2grjkiGtU8vPFJea2ktvR5U0MZ1mrL>

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

HOLY FATHER'S FEBRUARY PRAYER INTENTION

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their suffering considered and heeded.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Kristina, Baby Martha, John Castle, Petal Connell, Daniel Cuevas, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Sr Catherine, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Angus Clark, Karen Greig, Kitty Teasdale, Mary McNichol, Andrew Gunn, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol, Christine Robinson, Rose

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week: 31st January - 6th February: Mc Cormack, Edwin Brown, Laurence Lodge, Dame Teresa Rodrigues, Catherine Lillian Harris, Lady Agnes Eyston, Thomas Hogan, James Goodhall.

CHARITY

To help with supplying the Didcot Foodbank, contact Veronica Paget: veronicapaget@hotmail.com or leave suitable food outside her front door.

Jackymattam@btinternet.com helps with the poor locally.

GIVING: THE PARISH BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT

BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183

To arrange Gift Aid, contact : hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Please open the file below for resources for this week.



CLG Term 3 Sunday
31st January 2021.pdf

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Fourth Sunday in
Ordinary Time (B)
31st January 2021
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory to praise you. *Ps 105:47*

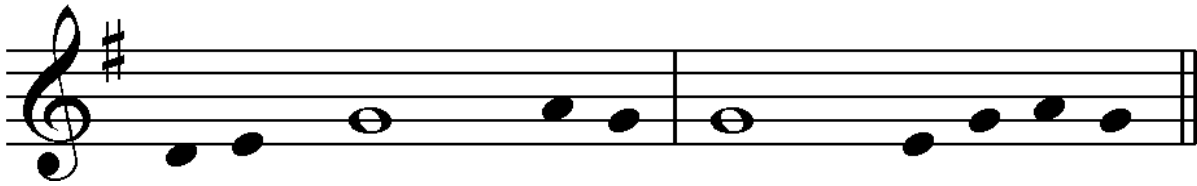
Salvos nos fac

Collect

Grant us, Lord our God, that we may honour you with all our mind, and love everyone in truth of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

First Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 (RSV)
Moses said to the people: ¹⁵ 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed—
¹⁶ just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' ¹⁷ And the LORD said to me, 'They have rightly said all that they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. ²⁰ But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.'



R/ O that **today you would listen to his voice!** |
Har - den not your hearts.

Come, let us ring out our joy to the Lord;
 hail the *rock* who saves us.
 Let us come into his presence, *giv-ing* thanks,
 let us hail him with a song of praise. **R/**

O come; let us bow and *bend* low.
 Let us kneel before the *God* who made us,
 for he is our God ~
 and we the people who belong to his *pas-ture*,
 the flock that is *led* by his hand. **R/**

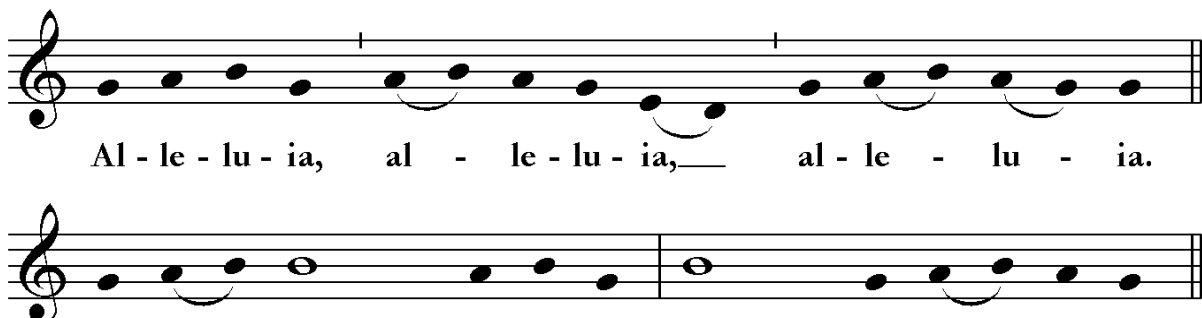
O that today you would listen to *his* voice!
 'Harden not your hearts as *at* Me-ri-bah,
 as on that day at Massah in the *de-sert*
 when your forebears put me to the test; ~
 when they tried me, though *they* saw my work.' **R/**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 (RSV)

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; ³³ but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his¹ wife, ³⁴ and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband. ³⁵ I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Alleluia



Bles-sed-are you, Father, Lord of *heaven* and earth:
 For revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to *all* be - lie-vers.

Communion Antiphon

Illumina faciem

Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful love. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you. *Cf Ps 30:17,18*

Prayer after Communion

Nourished by these redeeming gifts, we pray, O Lord, that through this help to eternal salvation true faith may ever increase.. Through Christ our Lord.

Alma Redemptoris Mater (until Candlemas)

MOTHER of Christ, hear thou thy people's cry
Star of the deep and Portal of the sky!
Mother of Him who thee from nothing made.
Sinking, we strive and call to thee for aid.
Oh, by that joy which Gabriel brought to thee,
Thou Virgin first and last, let us thy mercy see.

Ave Regina Cælorum (after Candlemas)

HAIL, Queen of Heaven, beyond compare,
to whom the angels homage pay;
hail, Root of Jesse, Gate of Light,
that opened for the world's new Day.

Rejoice, O Virgin unsurpassed,
in whom our ransom was begun,
for all thy loving children pray
to Christ, our Saviour, and thy Son.

Scripture Reading (Week 4 Year 1)

Monday Hebrews 11:32-40 Mark 5:1-20

The Presentation of the Lord (CANDLEMAS)

Wednesday Hebrews 12:1-7, 11-15 **Luke 2:22-40**

Thursday Hebrews 12:18-19,21-24 Mark 6:1-6

Friday Hebrews 13:1-8 Mark 6:7-13

Saturday Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21 Mark 6:14-29

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B) Mark 6:30-34

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23 **Mark 1:29-39**

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

1st – 6th February 2021

Week 4 (Year 1)

Collect

GRANT us, Lord our God, that we may honour you with all our mind, and love everyone in truth of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Monday 1st February

Reading

Hebrews 11:32-40

God had foreseen something better for us

³²And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated— ³⁸of whom the world was not worthy— wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

³⁹And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Reflection

AFTER paying tribute to the faith of Moses and of those who entered the Promised Land, the Letter to the Hebrews moves on to consider a list of subsequent figures. Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel are mentioned by name, and the prophets are mentioned as a group, but there is reference then to the unnamed heroes – male and female – whose faith was marked by courage, endurance, and hardship. What links all these people is that none fully received what was promised, since God had in store something more for those who come after. They form a cloud of witnesses (heavenly spectators) for those who put their faith and trust in Christ and they – with us – will find fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem, of which the Promised Land, towards which Moses travelled with the children of Israel, was a foretaste.

The Presentation of the Lord (CANDLEMAS)

Tuesday 2nd February

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, we humbly implore your majesty that, just as your Only-Begotten Son was presented on this day in the Temple in the substance of our flesh: so, by your grace we may be presented to you with minds made pure. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reading

Luke 2:22-40

Jesus is presented in the Temple

²² And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord') ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.' ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to



him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹ 'Lord, now let your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation
³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.'

³³ And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him; ³⁴ and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,

'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
and for a sign that is spoken against
³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also),
that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.'

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phan'u-el, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, ³⁷ and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Reflection

TODAY'S celebration marks the end of the Incarnation Cycle in the Calendar. It commemorates the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple by his parents, forty days after his birth. Formerly known as 'the Purification', a feast of our Lady marking her ritual purification after childbirth, this celebration is now observed as a feast of the Lord. Mary and Joseph were obedient to the Law and brought offerings. Lev 12:6 tells us what is expected: a year-old lamb and either a turtle dove or a young pigeon. For those who are poor, as Joseph and Mary clearly were, a couple of turtle doves or two young pigeons suffice. St Luke often pairs a male and a female character in the story, so we have Simeon and Anna, both living in expectation of salvation from the Lord. Also typical of St Luke is the emphasis on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has revealed to Simeon that, though he is old, he will not die before he sees the Messiah and, accordingly, he is 'inspired by the Spirit' to come to the Temple. Meanwhile, though 'night and day' is probably an exaggeration, the prophetess Anna spends a great deal of time in the temple precincts, and, seeing the Holy Family, prophesies the redemption of Israel. Simeon's song – *Nunc Dimittis* used daily at Night Prayer in the Church – recalls the theme of Isaiah's Servant Songs (see Is 42:6; 49:6), that the Lord's Anointed will be a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel. Forty days after Christmas the days are still short and the nights long, so it is no surprise that the Church seizes on the theme of Light of Christ in a dark world and celebrates with candles. It is also traditionally the occasion on which the candles for the year – at church and at home – are blessed.

Wednesday 3rd February

St Blaise, Bishop & Martyr

Collect

HEAR, O Lord, the supplications your people make under the patronage of the Martyr Saint Blaise, and grant that they may rejoice in peace in this present life, and find help for life eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reading

Hebrews 12:1-7, 11-15

The Example of Jesus

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵ And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons?—

**‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor lose courage when you are punished by him.**

**⁶ For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives.’**

⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹² Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴ Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled.

Reflection

YESTERDAY'S passage from the Letter to the Hebrews was pushed aside by the celebration of Candlemas. So we have strung together yesterday's and today's reading, to make a longer reading and to ensure that we can continue to follow the argument. What we have today is, first, the metaphor of a race (vv.1-4), with the risen, ascended, and glorified Lord cheering us on. Not only that but we are encouraged by the example he has set by enduring everything for the joy that lay ahead. We are encouraged too by the 'great cloud of witnesses', the heavenly spectators, the heroes about whom we were speaking earlier this week. The next section of the chapter (vv.4-13) is about the part discipline plays in the development of endurance – in the athletic training, if you will – and we read the beginning and end of that section (vv.4-7, 11-13). The last couple of verses of today's reading (vv.14-17) set in a community context what might be seen as an individual effort. After all, runners each run in search of an individual victory, and individual prize. The community is rather like a team: a team depends on peace and lack of rancour. We need not only individual holiness and virtue but communal holiness and virtue.

Thursday 4th February

Reading

Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24

You have come to Mount Zion, to the City of the Living God

¹⁸For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers entreat that no further messages be spoken to them. ... ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

Reflection

THE HOMILY – if the Epistle to the Hebrews is a homily – is coming to a climax. We contrast the earthly Mount Sinai with its daunting restrictions with the heavenly Mount Zion. The one is the inauguration of the Old Covenant, when God spoke to Moses and gave him the Law. (The Law

comprises both the Ten Commandments and the complex ceremonial of priesthood, sacrifice, and sanctuary). The mountain was not to be touched, there is darkness and gloom, thunder and the fearsome phenomenon of the *phonos*, the voice of God. All of this makes Moses tremble with fear. The other, Mount Zion, is the encounter with Jesus, mediator of the New Covenant. Here we encounter vibrant angelic life, the congregation of the just – that is, those enrolled in heaven - and the satisfaction of the perfect sin offering, which the writer contrasts with the blood shed by Abel, the blood of an innocent man which, until the sacrifice of Christ, cried out for vengeance (see Gen 4).

Friday 5th February

St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr

Collect

MAY THE Virgin Martyr Saint Agatha implore your compassion for us, O Lord, we pray, for she found favour with you by the courage of her martyrdom and the merit of her chastity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reading

Hebrews 13:1-8

Service well-pleasing to God

13 Let brotherly love continue. **2** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. **3** Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body. **4** Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous. **5** Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you.' **6** Hence we can confidently say,

**'The Lord is my helper,
I will not be afraid;
what can man do to me?'**

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.

Reflection

WE HAVE reached the final chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews. As we saw at the outset, it may have been a sermon, originally, rather than a letter. Some have suggested that the abrupt change of gear from chapter 12 to chapter 13 might indicate that chapter 13 is an addition, perhaps from another source. Others see chapter 13 as drawing out and emphasising themes found earlier in the book. By this stage we have covered some complex theological argument and unscrambled some very dense imagery and, whatever the literary origins, it is something of a relief to find ourselves now looking at some very straightforward moral exhortation, such as one might find either in a letter or a sermon. We begin with *philadelphia*, the love felt between blood relatives and this is extended to caring for others. By doing this 'some have entertained angels unawares', a deservedly famous phrase, summing up the heart of Jesus' teaching in the parable of 'The Great Assize':

And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me. (Mt 25:40)

There are warnings about sexual morality, the love of money, and covetousness. These warnings are to be expected in the context of a sermon or letter which has sternly taught that there is no second repentance.

Saturday 6th February

SS Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs

Collect

O GOD, strength of all the Saints, who through the Cross were pleased to call the Martyrs Saint Paul Miki and companions to life: grant, we pray, that by their intercession we may hold with courage even until death to the faith that we profess. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reading

Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21

Sacrifices well-pleasing to God

¹⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you....

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²² I appeal to you, brethren, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. ²³ You should understand that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. ²⁴ Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings. ²⁵ Grace be with all of you. Amen.

Reflection

THE LEADERS, whom the Letter mentioned yesterday (v.7) were those 'who spoke ... the word of God'. We were to 'consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith'. What was true remains true because 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever' (v.8). The final exhortation tells us to have respect for the leaders of today, whilst we offer a sacrifice of praise to God and practise good works (vv.15-16). Then, following a blessing, the Epistle to the Hebrews finishes with greetings, much as do the letters of St Paul, of which this book – letter or homily – was once thought to belong.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MARK,

Chapter by Chapter

Mark 2 *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

2 And when [Jesus] returned to Caper'na-um after some days, it was reported that he was at home. **2** And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. **3** And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. **4** And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. **5** And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'My son, your sins are forgiven.' **6** Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, **7** 'Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' **8** And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, 'Why do you question thus in your hearts? **9** Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'? **10** But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the paralytic— **11** 'I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.' **12** And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this!'

Jesus Calls Levi

13 He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd gathered about him, and he taught them. **14** And as he passed on, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him.

15 And as he sat at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. **16** And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' **17** And when Jesus heard it, he said to them,

'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.'

The Question about Fasting

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, 'Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?' **19** And Jesus said to them, 'Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. **20** The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. **21** No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. **22** And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins.'

Pronouncement about the Sabbath

23 One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck ears of grain. **24** And the Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?' **25** And he said to them, 'Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: **26** how he entered the house of God, when Abi'athar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?' **27** And he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; **28** so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.'

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