

**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



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, UNIVERSAL KING

21st – 28th November 2021

WEEK 34 YEAR 1

21st – 28th November 2021

All masses live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendred
St Mary's is usually open each day from 9am until late afternoon.

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, UNIVERSAL KING [White]
Sunday 21st November **9.30am** **Parish Mass** *Pro populo*
 12.30pm **Holy Baptism**
 Xanthe Nellie Frances Orange
 6pm **Holy Mass**

WEEK 34 (Year 1)

Monday 22nd November St Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr
 9.15am Holy Mass

Tuesday 23rd November St Clement I, Pope, Martyr [red]
 9.15am Holy Mass
 FM Leslie Leonard & Mary Agnes Langley 1998

Wednesday 24th November St Andrew Dung-Lac & Companions, Martyrs
 No Mass [red]

Thursday 25th November *St Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin, Martyr [red]*
 No Mass

Friday 26th November *Of Week 34* [green]
 No Mass

Saturday 27th November *Our Lady St Mary on Saturday* [white]
 No Mass

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT [Purple]
Sunday 28th November **9.30am** **Parish Mass** *Pro populo*
 11.15am **Holy Mass**
 at St Patrick's, East Ilsley
 6pm **Holy Mass**

CONTACT DETAILS

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Reflection *'The Sacrament of Reconciliation'*

WHEN Children are admitted to Holy Communion, they are first required to make their first Confession. This cannot happen before the age of seven, which, in Canon Law, is when children are judged to have developed a sense of right and wrong. Thereafter, every Catholic in good standing is required to participate in what is nowadays often called 'the Sacrament of Reconciliation' and receive Holy Communion at least once a year, the so-called 'Easter duties'. These duties can be undertaken any time between Ash Wednesday and Pentecost, a very generous definition of 'Easter'! Other than this 'duty', people may take part in the Sacrament of Penance (the old name) and receive Holy Communion whenever they wish, provided they attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Confession is strictly necessary only in the case of 'mortal sin' – apart from the annual 'Spring Clean' – but wrestling with smaller transgressions is advisable on a regular basis, whether in the nightly *examen* or routine use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Originally Confession was made by grievous offenders to the whole gathered church but, for reasons which are not hard to guess, it became more prudent for sin to be confessed in the presence of the pastor rather than the whole congregation.

Some people are daunted by the idea of someone they know overhearing their sins and they duly seek out somewhere else to make their confession. The Oratory in Oxford is a favourite place. Others prefer the two penitential services – Advent and Lent – put on in nearby churches. Others prefer to resort to the parish: our schedule locally is 8.45am on Sunday, after Mass Monday to Friday, or by arrangement. A catch-up before Christmas would be a very good thing!

Fr Andrew

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

We pray this week for all affected by the ravages of war and for those who have lost their lives in combat. We pray too for the people of Afghanistan and all who are seeking to prevent and relieve the onset of famine.

HOLY FATHER'S NOVEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that people who suffer from depression or burn-out will find support and a light that opens them up to life.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Baby Martha, Sid Wallace, Dame Catherine, Diana France, John Castle, Petal Connell, Daniel Cuevas, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Karen Greig, Kitty Teasdale, Mary McNichol, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 21st-27th November: Patrick Kelly, Lilian Purcell



CAFOD World gifts

As we rejoice in once again celebrating Christmas with our loved ones, let us spread our joy around the world by having a CAFOD World Gift under the tree. From energy saving stoves to weatherproof crops to emergency shelters, CAFOD's virtual charity gifts help transform the lives of families living in poverty. Buy online at cafod.org.uk/worldgifts or pick up a catalogue from the back of church.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

BOOKING FOR MASS

Booking is needed for St Patrick's, from 28th November onwards, because the available space is much smaller.

We shall also be taking bookings after 8th December for the Christmas masses.

For any who feel able to attend Sunday Mass only if socially distanced seating is provided, there will be a designated area reserved at the 6pm Mass, without prior booking on a first come, first served basis.

For Sunday Mass, people are asked to sign in with the stewards or to scan the NHS QR code on entering the church and to notify us if they test positive within a few days of being at mass. It is suggested that, before coming to Sunday Mass, people take a Lateral Flow Test.

We continue to ask you to wear masks if you are able to do so.

SYCAMORE

The **SYCAMORE** course for adults interested in finding out more about the Faith or preparing for baptism and/or confirmation is now well underway. Please contact aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk if you are interested, a.s.a.p. **SYCAMORE** meets on Tuesday at 8pm on Zoom.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Though Children's Liturgy is suspended, we have now restored the Children's Corner, with resources, and there are resources at the main door too. Please make use of all this whilst children are with you in church. For those at home, there is SDC Children's Liturgy Resource. Go to this site and select the date:

<http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/>

CANCELLED WEEKDAY MASSES

Please note that there is no Mass at St Mary's on Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th, and Friday 26th November. Also there will be no Mass on Tuesday 30th November. Apologies for the disruption of the routine.

CATHOLIC NETWORK

What was formerly 'the Universe', the most popular Catholic Newspaper, is no more. Instead there is a free on-line Catholic publication.

<http://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/>

ST AMAND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Amand's Catholic Primary School, East Hendred - your local Catholic primary school, where 'pupils enter with excitement and leave smiling...staff, parents and pupils are part of a loving family' OFSTED Report, September 2019

St Amand's School has had a very busy and fruitful start to the academic year 2021-22. We have been engaging with the COP 26 meetings and reflecting on how as a school community we can take better care of our world and treasure God's Creation. We enjoyed dressing up as Saints for a Light Festival and Bonfire which was well attended by many families. RISE Theatre will spend a day with us next week thinking about God's world. Soon we will be preparing for Advent and the ever-popular KS1 Nativity and the KS2 Carol Concert. We also had a visit from a Gold Medallist, Erin Kennedy, Paralympian and former pupil of St Amand's school.

St Amand's has places available for children in various year groups and if your child will be starting Reception in September 2022 please visit our friendly school to see how much a Catholic education has to offer. If you would like to know more please contact the Headteacher Mrs Ellery on [01235 833342](tel:01235833342)

Our website: www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk
or email office.3855@st-amands.oxon.sch.uk

Follow us on Twitter @StAmandPrimary or
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/St-Aminds-Catholic-Primary-School-10489078796526>

CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 14th November there were 193 hits from 58 unique viewers, with 119 on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 42 machines were in the UK and 15 in the rest of the world.

SYNOD 2021-2023

During October, the Holy Father launched a three-year consultation process with the whole Church. There are three stages. Between now and the end of April 2022, parishes are asked to produce a report to send to the diocese. These will be conflated nationally and, from September 2022 to March 2023, there will be continent-wide reflections throughout the world. Finally in October 2023, the Synod of Bishops will meet in Rome to produce a report for the Pope. Synods of Bishops are not new, nor are

deliberations of Bishops' Conferences. What is new is that every parish is asking people and groups to reflect on 'What changes need to be made – in myself, in our parish, in the Diocese, to make the Church's mission today more vibrant and effective?' We shall co-ordinate our parish response via individuals and accredited groups through the Parish Pastoral Council and the St Patrick's Pastoral Committee. More soon. Meanwhile, comments and suggestions to Fr Andrew or to John Carpenter.

E-NEWS FROM THE BISHOP

Earlier this week we sent out the diocesan E-News for the second time. It is issued every Tuesday and sent to Parish Priests. No one has complained about this further intrusion. If they do, we shall have to think again. It may help others if you quietly disregard it rather than asking to be unsubscribed. There is no easy way of sending it on to some but not others.

E-MAILS, WEBSITE, AND FACEBOOK

Last minute changes are sometimes unavoidable and these are communicated by e-mail to the Bulletin list. Anyone may join the Bulletin list - contact hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk – and particular care should be taken of those who have no access to e-mail.

See our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

GIVING

CHARITY: AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need is appealing for funds to help the suffering Church in Syria. The situation is desperate, and they are asking for donations. Contact 0345 646 0110 or www.acnuk.org/sy21donate

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

GIVING TO THE PARISH

BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT

BANK DETAILS: PRC DTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183

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

Please let us know (if you are a UK Taxpayer) if you are happy for us to claim Gift Aid. At the start of the tax year we need anybody in Gift Aid to let us know if they are no longer taxpayers. In that case we should not make a claim.

Donations to the parish: www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

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

Parish Priest:

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Office:

hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST, KING OF THE
UNIVERSE (B)**

21st November 2021

**Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

How worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and divinity, and wisdom and strength and honour. To him belong glory and power for ever and ever.

Dignus est Agnus

Rev 5:12; 1:6

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of the universe, grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free from slavery, may render your majesty service and ceaselessly proclaim your praise. 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

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13-14 (RSV)

Psalm 93:1-2, 5 R/1

R/ The Lord is king with majesty enrobed.

The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed;
the Lord has robed himself with might,
he has girded himself with power. **R/**

The world you made firm, not to be moved;
your throne has stood firm from of old.
From all eternity, O Lord, you are. **R/**

Truly your decrees are to be trusted.
Holiness is fitting to your house,
O Lord, until the end of time. **R/**

Second Reading

Apocalypse 1:5-8 (RSV)

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. ⁸ 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Alleluia, Alleluia

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! **Alleluia.**

Gospel

John 18:33-37 (RSV)

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' ³⁴ Jesus answered, 'Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?' ³⁵ Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?' ³⁶ Jesus answered, 'My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.' ³⁷ Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.'

Offertory Hymn

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus (*see below*)

Prayer over the Offerings

As we offer you, O Lord, the sacrifice by which the human race is reconciled to you, we humbly pray that your Son himself may bestow on all nations the gifts of unity and peace. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(De Christo universorum Rege)

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. For you anointed your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with the oil of gladness as eternal Priest and King of all creation, so that, by offering himself on the altar of the Cross as a spotless sacrifice to bring us peace, he might accomplish the mysteries of human redemption and, making all created things subject to his rule, he might present to the

immensity of your majesty an eternal and universal kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love, and peace. 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.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION *after St Alphonsus Liguori (18th cent.)*

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Even if I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there, and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus. There is room in my heart for you.

Communion Antiphon

Sedebit Dominus Rex

The Lord sits as King for ever. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Ps 29:10-11

Post Communion Hymn At the Name of Jesus (see below)

Prayer after Communion

Having received the food of immortality, we ask, O Lord, that, glorifying in obedience to the commands of Christ, the King of the universe, we may live with him eternally in his heavenly Kingdom. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Salve Regina

Scripture Reading (Week 34 Year 1)

Monday	Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20	Luke 21:1-4
Tuesday	Daniel 2:31-45	Luke 21:5-11
Wednesday	Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28	Luke 21:12-19
Thursday	Daniel 6:12-28	Luke 21:20-28
Friday	Daniel 7:2-14	Luke 21:29-33
Saturday	Daniel 7:15-27	Luke 21:34-36

ADVENT SUNDAY C

Jeremiah 33:14-16

1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 4:2
34-36

Luke 21:25-28,

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HYMNS FOR CHRIST THE KING

ALLELUIA! Sing to Jesus!
his the sceptre, his the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph,
his the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
thunder like a mighty flood.
Jesus, out of every nation,
hath redeemed us by his blood.

Alleluia! Not as orphans
are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia! He is near us;
faith believes nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight
received him
when the forty days were o'er,
shall our hearts forget his
promise,
'I AM with you evermore'?

Alleluia! Bread of Angels,
thou on earth our food, our stay;
Alleluia! Here the sinful
flee to thee from day to day.
Intercessor, Friend of sinners,
earth's Redeemer, plead for me,,
where the songs of all the sinless
sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia! King eternal,
thee the Lord of lords we own:
Alleluia! born of Mary,
earth thy footstool, heaven thy
throne:
thou within the veil, hast entered,
robed in flesh, our great High
Priest:
thou on earth both Priest and
Victim,
in the Eucharistic feast!

W Chatterton Dix

AT THE Name of Jesus
every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'tis the Father's pleasure
we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word.

At his voice creation
sprang at once to sight:
all the angel faces,
all the hosts of light,
thrones and dominations,
stars upon their way,
all the heavenly orders
in their great array.

Humbled for a season,
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners,
unto whom he came;
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious
when from death he passed;

Bore it up triumphant,
with its human light,
through all ranks of creatures,
to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead,
to the Father's breast,
filled it with the glory
of that perfect rest.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus
shall return again,
with the Father's glory
with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire
meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him
King of glory now.

Caroline Noel

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

22nd – 26th November 2021

The Book of Daniel

WE SPEND this week, the last week of the Church's Year, with extracts from the Book of Daniel prescribed for the first reading at Mass. For the sake of public reading, the extracts are, as often is the case, an abbreviation of a biblical chapter or passage. Here we are presenting them without abbreviation – length is less of a problem when a passage is read privately – and we have included the Saturday reading as part of the Friday provision. This all makes for a more satisfying encounter with this book of the Bible, with its dramatic tales of derring-do.

Canticles in Week 34

Benedicite omnia opera and *Benedictus es* are two canticles from Daniel 3 in the Septuagint (Greek) version. They are used in place of the responsorial psalm in Week 34, as well as in the Office. They are liturgical in nature and may very well derive from chants used in the worship of the Jewish Temple, perhaps remembered and recounted during the Babylonian Exile.

Monday of Week 34 [Year 1]

22nd November

St Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr

Reading

Daniel 1:1-20 (RSV)

Four Young Israelites at the Babylonian Court

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoi'akim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord gave Jehoi'akim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. **3** Then the king commanded Ash'penaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, **4** youths without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters and language of the Chalde'ans. **5** The king assigned them a daily portion of the rich food which the king ate, and of the wine which he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. **6** Among these were Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah of the tribe of Judah. **7** And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hanani'ah he called Shadrach, Mish'a-el he called Meshach, and Azari'ah he called Abed'nego.

8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's rich food, or with the wine which he drank; therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. **9** And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs; **10** and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, 'I fear lest my lord the king, who appointed your food and your drink, should see that you were in poorer condition than the youths who are of your own age. So you would endanger my head with the king.' **11** Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah, **12** 'Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13** Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's rich food be observed by you, and according to what you see deal with your servants.' **14** So he hearkened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. **15** At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh

than all the youths who ate the king's rich food. ¹⁶ So the steward took away their rich food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all letters and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah; therefore they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.

Reflection

AT THE beginning of the Babylonian exile four young men find themselves in the King's palace, fêted with fine wine and food. Their leader – Daniel, now called Belteshazzar – and his three companions – Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah – ask to be fed on vegetables instead and, to general amazement, they are found to be as healthy and wise, after ten days, as they were before. Our experience of vegetarianism is such that this does not surprise us but, until fairly recently, when only the poor lived mainly on vegetables, this was thought to be a defective diet. The youths are said to be ten times as clever as the King's magicians and enchanters and this turn of phrase alerts us to what kind of book Daniel is. Though Daniel is classified by Catholics as the last of the major prophets – after Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel – it is regarded by the Rabbis as one of the Writings, the third category, ranked after the Law and the Prophets. Certainly it contains wonderful stories – the Burning Fiery Furnace, the History of Susanna, Daniel in the Lions' Den, Belshazzar's Feast, Bel and the Dragon – but it is also the source of important theological motifs such as 'the Son of Man' and 'the Kingdom of God', ideas which resonated at the time of Jesus. There is much untidiness in the book: parts originally written in Hebrew, parts written in Aramaic, parts in Greek, different arrangements of the material. We cannot be sure when it was composed. Traditionally it was ascribed to Daniel himself, writing at the time of at least some of the events described. Modern scholarship has tended towards a much later date – not the sixth century BC but the second century BC, more or less at the same time as Antiochus IV Epiphanes (whom we encountered last week in

the readings from Maccabees). The mood of oppression fits the time of the Greek Empire every bit as well as it fits the Babylonian Captivity. Nevertheless the later dating also has its problems – some of the Aramaic fits an earlier, sixth century date better and some of the prophecies make more sense if made earlier. So, for example, a second century understanding of Daniel 9:26 would be that Antiochus IV Epiphanes is the ‘prince who is to come [and] destroy the city and the sanctuary’ but, in actual fact, Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a defiler and not a destroyer of Jerusalem and its Temple. The full destruction was to be the work of the Romans in AD70. In short, just as Daniel is a mixture of writings in different languages, different selections being adopted as canonical Scripture by different authorities, so it is more than likely a combination of texts from different centuries.

Tuesday 23rd November *[Year 1]*

St Clement I, Pope, Martyr

Reading

Daniel 2:31-45 (RSV)

³¹ You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces; ³⁵ then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶ This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation. ³⁷ You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, ³⁸ and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the sons of men, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. ³⁹ After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰ And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things; and like iron which crushes, it

shall break and crush all these. ⁴¹ And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the miry clay. ⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ As you saw the iron mixed with miry clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever; ⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.'

Reflection

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S dream about a metallic 'image' is not one which his magicians and enchanters can interpret. It is all the harder for them because the King is insisting not only that they interpret but, without prompting, can also recount the details of the dream. Quite reasonably, they decline to do that, thus incurring the King's fury. All will be executed – including Daniel and the three young men. Daniel asks for a stay of execution from the Captain of the Guard whilst he seeks guidance from the Lord. He recounts the dream: the head of gold, the chest of silver, the midriff of bronze, and the legs and feet of iron are struck by a stone of ever-increasing size, cut from a mountain by no human hand. The metallic 'image' is shattered: it is the downfall of four kingdoms, brought about by the supernatural action of a fifth and eternal kingdom, the stone being God's holy Temple, and the image being pagan worship, as found whether in sixth century BC Babylon or second century BC Jerusalem. The four kingdoms and empires are thought to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, though some modern scholars have thought about separating Media and Persia, so that Greece is the last of the four. In any case, we are contrasting worldly, pagan, power with the Kingdom of God.

Wednesday in Week 34 [Year 1]

24th November

St Andrew Dung-Lac, Priest, & Companions, Martyrs

Reading

Daniel 5:1-28 (RSV)

The Writing on the Wall

5 King Belshaz'zar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in front of the thousand.

2 Belshaz'zar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. **3** Then they brought in the golden and silver vessels^[b] which had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. **4** They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

5 Immediately the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand; and the king saw the hand as it wrote. **6** Then the king's colour changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. **7** The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chalde'ans, and the astrologers. The king said to the wise men of Babylon, 'Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.' **8** Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. **9** Then King Belshaz'zar was greatly alarmed, and his colour changed; and his lords were perplexed.

10 The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall; and the queen said, 'O king, live for ever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your colour change. **11** There is in your kingdom a man in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chalde'ans, and astrologers, **12** because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding

to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshaz'zar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.'

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king said to Daniel, 'You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. ¹⁴ I have heard of you that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. ¹⁵ Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation; but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. ¹⁶ But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.'

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered before the king, 'Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty; ¹⁹ and because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. ²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him; ²¹ he was driven from among men, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will. ²² And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, ²³ but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven; and the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honoured.

²⁴ Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. ²⁵ And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. ²⁶ This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; ²⁷ TEKEL,

you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; ²⁸ PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.'

Reflection

WE ARE now in the middle of the sixth century BC and in the last days of Belshazzar who holds a great feast, displaying rather unwisely the sacred vessels looted by Nebuchadnezzar (who is somewhat inaccurately referred to as Belshazzar's father). A man's hand writes on the wall 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN.' The Queen Mother suggests to the terrified Belshazzar that Daniel be summoned to interpret the message. As we still say, 'The writing is on the wall' and the days of Belshazzar are numbered. After the reading finishes, we learn that, perhaps to ward off his fate, Belshazzar makes Daniel third in the kingdom – ranking below the King and his father Nabonidus – but that very night the Medes and Persians invade, Belshazzar is slain, and Darius the Mede becomes King.

Thursday in Week 34 [Year 1]

25th November

St Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin, Martyr

Reading

Daniel 6:12-28 (RSV)

Daniel and the Lions' Den

¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the interdict, 'O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that any man who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?' The king answered, 'The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.'¹³ Then they answered before the king, 'That Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no heed to you, O king, or the interdict you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.'

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed, and set his mind to deliver Daniel; and he laboured till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king, and said to the king, 'Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance which the king establishes can be changed.'

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, 'May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!' ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace, and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ When he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish and said to Daniel, 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?' ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, 'O king, live for ever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.' ²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ And the king commanded, and those men who had accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: 'Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

for he is the living God,
enduring for ever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the end.

²⁷ He delivers and rescues,
he works signs and wonders
in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions.'

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Reflection

BY NOW Daniel is an elder statesman and is appointed by Darius not only as one of the 120 satraps (administrators) of the Empire but among the top three, with the role of first minister in view. An outbreak of jealousy leads fellow courtiers to plot for the forbidding of prayer to any god or man but Darius for thirty days. Daniel, of course, is discovered engaged in the true prayer of an observant Jew. Darius reluctantly agrees to the penalty of a death sentence of being thrown to the lions and Daniel and his companions duly find themselves in the lions' den. An angel is sent to calm the lions and, miraculously, our four heroes emerge unscathed. Terrible revenge is wreaked on the plotters and their households: they are thrown to the lions. Darius prescribes worship of the true God. Thus runs the story. We are left to wonder who exactly 'Darius the Mede' is. Was it another name for Cyrus the Persian who first rescued the Jews from exile in Babylon? Was it Gubaru, Cyrus' general, who was appointed administrator over Babylon by Cyrus? Or is it unhistorical, a confusion with other rulers with the name 'Darius', for example the fifth century 'Darius the Great'? The central message of the story is that the devout Jew – of which Daniel is the exemplar – does not collude with false worship, he prays towards the Temple three times a day, the times of sacrifice, and is prepared to lay down his life, offering his own body as a sacrifice.

Friday in Week 34 [Year 1]

26th November

Reading

Daniel 7:2-14, [15-27] (RSV)

Judgment before the Ancient One

² Daniel said, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. ³ And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. ⁴ The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand upon two feet like a man; and the mind of a man was given to it. ⁵ And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side; it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' ⁶ After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four

wings of a bird on its back; and the beast had four heads; and dominion was given to it. ⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrible and dreadful and exceedingly strong; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. ⁸ I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. ⁹ As I looked,

 thrones were placed
 and one that was ancient of days took his seat;
 his raiment was white as snow,
 and the hair of his head like pure wool;
 his throne was fiery flames,
 its wheels were burning fire.
¹⁰ A stream of fire issued
 and came forth from before him;
 a thousand thousands served him,
 and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
 the court sat in judgment,
 and the books were opened.

¹¹ I looked then because of the sound of the great words which the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. ¹³ I saw in the night visions,

 and behold, with the clouds of heaven
 there came one like a son of man,
 and he came to the Ancient of Days
 and was presented before him.
¹⁴ And to him was given dominion
 and glory and kingdom,
 that all peoples, nations, and languages
 should serve him;
 his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
 which shall not pass away,
 and his kingdom one
 that shall not be destroyed.

[Daniel's Visions Interpreted

¹⁵ 'As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious and the visions of my head alarmed me. ¹⁶ I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me, and made known to me the interpretation of the things. ¹⁷ 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, for ever and ever.'

¹⁹ 'Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrible, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze; and which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up and before which three of them fell, the horn which had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and which seemed greater than its fellows. ²¹ As I looked, this horn made war with the saints, and prevailed over them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints received the kingdom.

²³ 'Thus he said: 'As for the fourth beast,

there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth,
which shall be different from all the kingdoms,
and it shall devour the whole earth,
and trample it down, and break it to pieces.

²⁴ As for the ten horns,
out of this kingdom
ten kings shall arise,
and another shall arise after them;
he shall be different from the former ones,
and shall put down three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak words against the Most High,
and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,
and shall think to change the times and the law;
and they shall be given into his hand
for a time, two times, and half a time.

²⁶ But the court shall sit in judgment,
and his dominion shall be taken away,
to be consumed and destroyed to the end.

²⁷ And the kingdom and the dominion

and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.’]

Reflection

WE HAVE put together Friday’s and Saturday’s readings, to give completeness both to our excursion into the Book of Daniel and to the end of the readings for Year 1. (The Saturday passage is between the brackets []).

After a series of adventures at the court of the King (chapters 1-6), the next half a dozen chapters of Daniel are visions and oracles flowing on from the earlier chapters. Thus, what we have in today’s reading is very much what was contained in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. So – now in the reign of Belshazzar – we learn about the ‘four great beasts’: a winged lion, a lopsided bear, a leopard with four wings and four heads, a great dragon-like beast. These were always thought to represent the four empires: Babylon, which gave way to Medo-Persia, which gave way to Greece, and then to Rome. The winged lion was a symbol of Babylon. The lopsided bear represents the unequal partnership between the Medes and the Persians. The leopard, with its four parts, represents the speedy rise of the Greeks and the division of Alexander the Great’s empire into four. The dragon-like beast was Rome, whose rule over the Jews until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was to extend to ten emperors. As we saw on Tuesday, there is a more modern interpretation – that the four empires were Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. If that were the case the boastful horn, displacing three of the ten horns, would be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, he who persecuted the Maccabees in the second century.

These night visions of Daniel yielded up the appearance of the Ancient of Days and ‘one like a son of man’ to whom is given:

**dominion and glory and kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him.**

This is the vision of Christ enthroned amidst the splendour of the Father, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, whom we celebrated as the Universal King last Sunday and whose First and Second comings we celebrate and anticipate during the season of Advent.