

DEANERY OF ST EDMUND CAMPION

ENGLISH MARTYRS—

VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE PASTORAL AREA

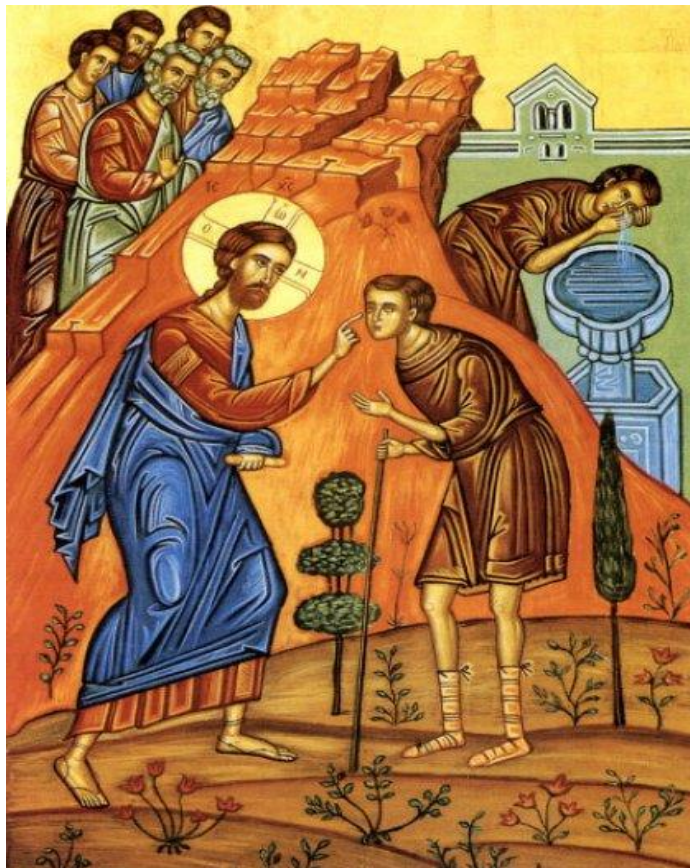
www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish

27th February – 5th March 2022

(Week 8)



Quinquagesima

27th February – 5th March 2022

WEEK 8 [YEAR 2]

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

St Mary's is usually open each day from 9am until late afternoon.

Sunday 27th February	EIGHTH SUNDAY <i>Per Annum</i> (Year C) <i>Quinquagesima</i>	[GREEN]
	9.30am Parish Mass	<i>Pro populo</i>
	11.15am Mass at St Patrick's	
	6pm Holy Mass	
<i>(Readings: Ordinary Time Week 8: Year 2)</i>		
Monday 28th February	<i>Of Week 8</i>	[Green]
	9.15am Holy Mass	<i>Holy Souls (Julie Lazarus)</i>
Tuesday 1st March	St David	[White]
	9.15am Holy Mass	<i>FM Edward Woods 1937</i>
<i>(Readings: Lent)</i>		
Wednesday 2nd March	ASH WEDNESDAY	[Purple]
	9am Morning Prayer	
	11am Holy Mass with Imposition of Ash	<i>(attended by school)</i>
	6pm Holy Mass with Imposition of Ash	<i>Pro populo</i>
Thursday 3rd March	<i>after Ash Wednesday</i>	[Purple]
	9.15am Holy Mass	<i>FM Bridget Woods 1937</i>
Friday 4th March	<i>after Ash Wednesday</i>	[Purple]
	8.30am Holy Mass at Hendred House	
	5pm Evensong at St Augustine's Church	
Saturday 5^h March	<i>after Ash Wednesday</i>	[Purple]
	<i>No Mass</i>	
Sunday 6th March	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT	[PURPLE]
	9.30am Parish Mass	<i>Pro populo</i>
	11.15am Mass at St Patrick's	
	6pm Holy Mass	<i>FM Louisa Goddard 1967</i>

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

Note New Parish E-Mail Address

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S FEBRUARY PRAYER INTENTION

We pray for religious sisters and consecrated women; thanking them for their mission and their courage; may they continue to find new responses to the challenges of our times.

HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION

For a Christian response to bioethical challenges: We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.

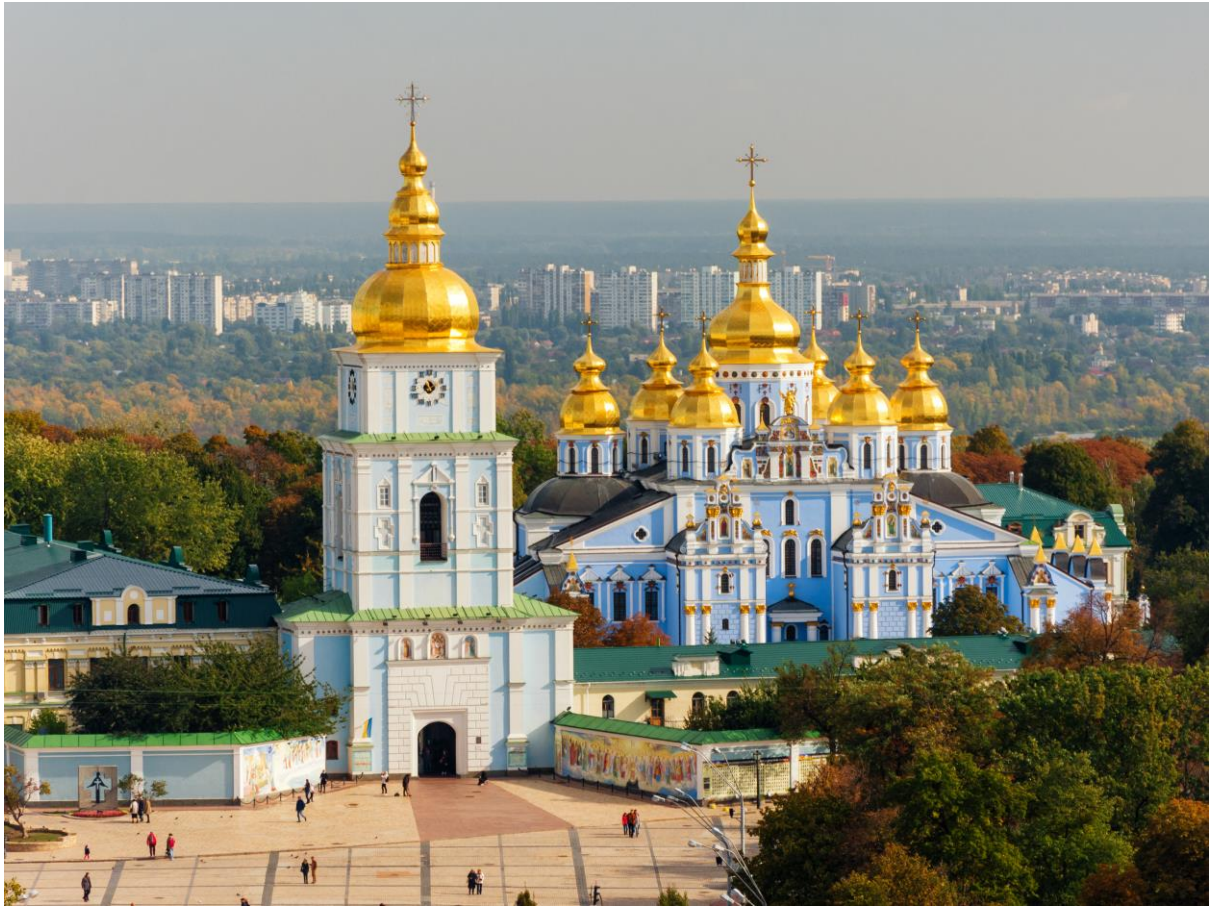
THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

- *Week 27th Feb - 5th March:* Agnes Winifred Yardley, Mary Rush, Matthew castle, Thomas Regan, Patrick Barnes, Elizabeth Hunt, Amy Stibbs, George Dunn, Fr Michael Sexton.

PRAY FOR PEACE



St Michael's Cathedral- Monastery, Kiev

Reflection *The Gospel according to St Luke (Part II)*

IN THE opening chapters of the Gospel, St Luke relates a number of stories having to do with the birth and childhood of Jesus, including the announcements made to Zechariah and to Mary concerning the births of John and of Jesus, and the story of the shepherds watching their flocks at night who came to worship the newborn child. We also have accounts of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem and of the child being wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger 'because there was no room for them in the inn.' After eight days, the child was circumcised, and later he was blessed by Simeon and by Anna. These stories are not reported in the other Gospels, and we cannot be sure whether Luke learned about them from an older source or from oral traditions. Luke also recorded the only story we have in the New Testament about Jesus' boyhood. When Jesus was twelve years old, he went to Jerusalem with his parents to attend the Feast of Passover. On the way home, when his parents discovered that he was not with them, they returned to the Temple and found him involved in a profound discussion with prominent Jewish rabbis.

After the introductory chapters, Luke follows the outline of events as they are recorded in the Gospel of Mark. However, he does not follow Mark's narrative as closely as Matthew does. Occasionally, he leaves out some material and substitutes an item of his own. For example, he substitutes an illustration of Jesus' preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth in place of Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of his Galilean ministry.

Luke includes a considerable number of Jesus' teachings that are not recorded in the other Gospels. If he and Matthew both used the same source *Q*, evidently Luke used more material from it than did Matthew. In Luke alone we find the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee who went to the Temple to pray, the rich man and Lazarus, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich fool who would tear down his barns and build greater barns in order that he might store his goods, and the story of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree in order that he might see Jesus. Each of these parables and stories illustrates what Luke regards as an essential characteristic of Jesus' work. Jesus was not trying to raise opposition to the Roman government, nor was he lacking in sympathy or understanding of those whom the Jews regarded as foreigners. He places the highest value on good character regardless of a person's race or nationality. For example, although many Jews looked with disfavour on the Samaritans, Luke emphasizes that of the ten lepers whom Jesus healed, only the one who was a Samaritan expressed his gratitude for what Jesus had done. And again in the parable of the man who fell among thieves on the road to Jericho, a Samaritan befriended the man and saw to it that he was given proper care.

adapted from

www.cliffsnotes.com > Literature Notes > New Testament of the Bible

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

LENT

Please note the Ash Wednesday schedule: Mass at 11am and 6pm with imposition of Ash. During Lent, there will be Morning Prayer at 9am on Wednesdays, before Mass, to which members of St Augustine's congregation are invited. On Fridays we are invited to St Augustine's at 5pm for Evensong. Please try to support these extra activities.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 20th February 2022, 191 people viewed, 59 machines looking only at St Mary's. 38 of these were in the UK and 21 elsewhere. 109 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

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 and meets on Zoom this Tuesday, 22nd February.

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 office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk
See also our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk
See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK

Fully escorted Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, Ireland, celebrating the feast of St Patrick, 14th March 2022. £699.00 per person sharing. Price includes flight with 10kg hand luggage, all transfers, four nights in Knock House Hotel with full board. All entertainment and excursions included. Lunches on days out. Wheelchair accessible rooms. Single room supplement £100. Contact Patricia on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or knockpilgrimages@gmail.com. Knock Pilgrimages is a member of the Travel Trust Association and is fully protected by ATOL T7613.

GIVING



CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY – LENT APPEAL

Every child should grow big and strong. Family Fast Day is Friday 11th March, a day when we eat simply and give generously to support mums around the world, like Amie in Sierra Leone, with expert training in growing and making healthy food. Your small act of love will make a big difference to many communities affected by extreme hunger and children suffering from malnutrition. You can donate in church using a CAFOD envelope or by visiting [Family Fast Day - Lent 2022 | CAFOD](#)

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

CHARITY: HENDRED

The Hendred Environment Group, led by Cllr Sally Povolotsky, has launched a Community Larder in the village. It both makes available excess supermarket food that would otherwise go to waste (good for the environment) and makes this food available at well below market price, without the stigma or red tape of a food bank as it's open to all for a small subscription. There are posters explaining, including one in the Church porch at St Mary's.

TO GIVE TO OUR 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

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Eighth Sunday in
Ordinary Time (C)
27th February 2022
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

The Lord became my protector. He brought me out to a place of freedom;
he saved me because he delighted in me.

Factus est Dominus

Cf Ps 18:19-20

Collect

Grant us, O Lord, we pray, that the course of our world may be directed
by your peaceful rule and that your Church may rejoice, untroubled in her
devotion. 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

When a sieve is shaken, the refuse remains;
so a man's filth remains in his thoughts.

The kiln tests the potter's vessels;

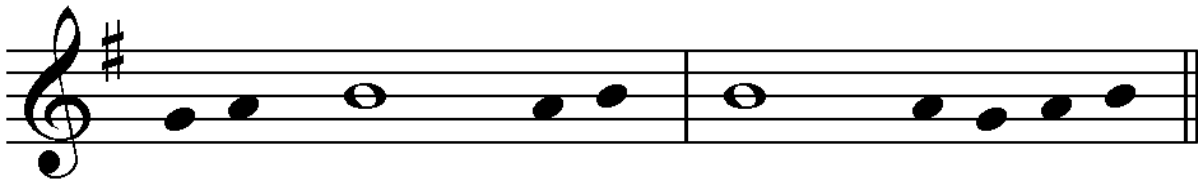
so the test of a man is in his reasoning.

The fruit discloses the cultivation of a tree;

so the expression of a thought discloses the cultivation of a man's
mind.

Do not praise a man before you hear him reason,
for this is the test of men.

Sirach 27:4-7 (RSV)



R/ *It is* **good to give you thanks, O Lord. | ()**

It is good to give thanks to *the* Lord,
to make music to your *name*, O Most High,
to proclaim your loving mercy in the *mor*-ning,
and your truth in the *wat*-ches of the night. **R/**

The just will flourish like the *palm* tree
and grow like a *Le-ba-non* cedar. **R/**

Planted in the house of *the* Lord
they will flourish in the *courts* of our God,
still bearing fruit when they *are* old,
still full *of* sap, still green,
to proclaim that the Lord is *up*-right.
In him, my rock, *there* is no wrong. **R/**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 (RSV)

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

'Death is swallowed up in victory.'
'O death, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?'

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

Gospel Acclamation

You will shine as lights in the world: holding fast the word of life.

Gospel

Luke 6:39-45 (RSV)

At that time: Jesus told his disciples a parable: 'Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. 'For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart

produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Offertory Hymn Christ be beside me (*see below*)

Prayer over the Offerings

O God, who provide gifts to be offered to your name and count our oblations as signs of our desire to serve you with devotion, we ask of your mercy that what you grant as the source of merit may also help us to attain merit's reward. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface *VIII De Ecclesia adunata ex unitate Trinitatis*

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, when your children were scattered afar by sin, through the Blood of your Son and the power of the Spirit, you gathered them again to yourself, that a people, formed as one by the unity of the Trinity, made the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, might, to the praise of your manifold wisdom, be manifest as the Church. And so, in company with the choirs of Angels, we praise you, and with joy we proclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

Communion Antiphon *Cantabo Domino*

I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me, sing psalms to the Name of the Lord Most High. *Cf Ps 13:6*

Post Communion Hymn Love divine (*see below*)

Prayer after Communion

Nourished by your saving gifts, we beseech your mercy, Lord, that by this same Sacrament with which you feed us in the present age, you may make us partakers of life eternal. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading

Week 8 (Year 2)

Monday	1 Peter 1:3-9	Mark 10:17-27
Tuesday	1 Peter 1:10-16	Mark 10:28-31
ASH WEDNESDAY		
	Joel 2:12-18	
	2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
(Lent)		
Thursday	Deuteronomy 30:15-20	Luke 9:2-25
Friday	Isaiah 58:1-9	Matthew 9:14-15
Saturday	Isaiah 58:9-14	Luke 5:27-32
Lent 1C	Deuteronomy 26:4-10	
	Romans 10:8-13	Luke 4:1-13

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Offertory

CHRIST beside me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
King of my heart;
Christ within me,
Christ below me,
Christ above me
never to part.

2 Christ on my right hand,
Christ on my left hand,
Christ all around me
shield in the strife;
Christ in my sleeping,
Christ in my sitting,
Christ in my rising
light of my life.

3 Christ beside me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
King of my heart;
Christ within me,
Christ below me,
Christ above me
never to part.

James Quinn SJ

Post Communion

LOVE divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heav'n, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art.
Visit us with thy salvation;
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Come, Almighty, to deliver,
let us all thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without
ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

3 Finish, then, thy new creation;
true and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee.
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Charles Wesley

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

28th February – 4th March 2022

Eighth Week *Per Annum*/ *Beginning of Lent*

Weekday Lectionary Year 2

Monday in Week 8 [*Year 2*]

28th February

Reading

1 Peter 1:3-9 (RSV)

A Living Hope

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials,⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. ⁹ As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.

Reflection

THE FIRST letter of St Peter, after a couple of verses introduction, launches into the confident expression of Christian faith and hope that we find into today's reading. For church musicians it is the text of the memorable anthem by S. S. Wesley, written for Easter Sunday evensong at Hereford Cathedral in 1834, when only trebles and the Dean's butler singing bass were available. For theologians it is a no less resounding treatise on the meaning of Baptism, or even, perhaps, an extract from a liturgical baptismal text. From any angle it is an exploration of the

meaning of Christian life as re-birth into eternal life, an idea which it has in common with how Jesus explains things when Nicodemus visits him (John 3). Re-birth describes both God's sovereign power and the transformation which becoming a Christian brings to the individual believer, a transformation which enables us to withstand trials, much as gold is tested in a furnace. Suffering leads to glory and the living hope of believers is found in the resurrection of Christ in which we are reborn to eternal life. We are told 'without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy'. The First Letter of St Peter is writing not to eyewitnesses of the resurrection but to a subsequent generation – and thus onward – who find love and joy without seeing the Risen Christ. With love and joy comes faith and salvation.

St David

Tuesday in Week 8 [Year 2]

1st March

Reading

1 Peter 1:10-16 (RSV)

A Call to Holy Living

¹⁰The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; ¹¹they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

¹³Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; ¹⁶since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'

Reflection

THE OPENING verses of today's reading ground the resurrection faith in the work of the prophets, themselves inspired by the Spirit of Christ working within them. Suffering leads to glory, they attest, and this pattern is the hallmark of the Christian vocation. The ability to proclaim the Gospel is itself a grace and those who share in the Christian life have received something which angels long to have. The author cannot conceal his pride and joy in being a Christian. The consequence of discipleship is that demands are made on us. We need to gird up the loins of our minds: 'girding the loins' comes from Exodus 12, eating the Passover dressed for action, and Luke 12, waiting with lighted lamps for the master to come home from the marriage feast. Self-control and holiness are the watchwords for those whose hope is set fully upon the grace which comes with the revelation of Jesus Christ.

ASH WEDNESDAY

2nd March

Collect

GRANT, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils. We may be armed with weapons of self-restraint. 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

Matthew 6:1-18 (RSV)

Concerning Almsgiving

'Beware of practising your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³But when

you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Concerning Prayer

⁵'And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷'And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this:

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
¹⁰Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹Give us this day our daily bread;
¹²And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
¹³And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

¹⁴For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Concerning Fasting

¹⁶'And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Reflection

The Gospel, as read in Church on Ash Wednesday, omits verses 7-15 of the passage as we have given it here. The passage omitted broadly comprises the Lord's Prayer, which receives separate attention on the Tuesday of the First Week of Lent. The three sections 'Almsgiving', 'Prayer', and 'Fasting', as I remark every Lent, deal with our relationship with others ('Almsgiving'), with God ('Prayer'), and with oneself ('Fasting') In that sense, it would have been better, perhaps, if the Evangelist or his editor had begun with 'Prayer', though, of course, it is possible that what is being recalled is the Lord's own setting out of these religious tasks. They are the Christian equivalent of the five pillars of Islam – Islam also includes reciting the Muslim profession of faith and pilgrimage to Mecca – and we surely have something to learn - and recover from our history - if we took Lent as seriously as Muslims take *Ramadan* and punctuated the day with prayer in the disciplined way many Muslims approach *Salat*. Lent is about the quality of our spiritual lives, however, and not the number of duties performed so, most of all, it is a time to reflect on – and grow in – our work of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.

Thursday 3rd March

Reading

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (RSV)

See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil.

¹⁵ ` See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which

the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.'

Reflection

THE READINGS in Lent are no longer organised as *lectio continua*, where each day's readings continue from where the readings from the day before have left off. During Lent, different passages from different parts of the Bible, are selected as an anthology. So, today, as our Lenten discipline begins, we are presented with words from the third of four addresses by Moses to the people of Israel. The title 'Deuteronomy' combines 'second' and 'Law', so we are looking at a fresh presentation of the *Torah*, whenever that was done. There are several scholarly opinions about when the book was written, giving us very different dates in Israelite history, but it is essentially a call to a renewed and pure Judaism. Today, then, we are challenged to choose between life and good, on the one hand, and death and evil, on the other. Lent is a time for choice and the challenge is to choose life.

Friday 4th March

Reading

Isaiah 58:1-9 (RSV)

False and True Worship

'Cry aloud, spare not,
lift up your voice like a trumpet;
declare to my people their transgression,
to the house of Jacob their sins.
² Yet they seek me daily,
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that did righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.
³ 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not?
Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no
knowledge of it?'
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,^[a]
and oppress all your workers.
⁴ Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to hit with wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day
will not make your voice to be heard on high.
⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day for a man to humble himself?
Is it to bow down his head like a rush,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
Will you call this a fast,
and a day acceptable to the LORD?
⁶ 'Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
⁸ Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Reflection

IN EARLY Jewish practice, fasting was connected with seeking God's mercy. Difficult conditions, such as the threat of military defeat, prompted the need for corporate fasting. Fasting in this sense is very different from fasting in the Christian tradition where it becomes an ascetical practice, a means of self-regulation and improvement. In this passage from the last part of the Book of Isaiah, Judah is struggling with the restoration of Jerusalem after the Exile (see Zech 8:18-23). Will the city – Mount Zion – once again become glorious, will it become a focus for the nations? The message of the prophet here is that fasting in itself is insufficient. What is needed is justice, care for those in need, feeding and housing the poor. These actions would speak eloquently of God's glory and the holiness of God's people and bring about the restoration of Jerusalem.

Saturday 20th February

Reading

Isaiah 58:9-14

Your light shall rise in the darkness

- ⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.
'If you take away from the midst of you the yoke,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
¹⁰ if you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.
¹¹ And the LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your desire with good things,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters fail not.
¹² And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in.
¹³ 'If you turn back your foot from the sabbath,
from doing your pleasure^[a] on my holy day,
and call the sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the LORD honourable;
if you honour it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the LORD,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

Reflection

THE MESSAGE of Isaiah 58, which we encountered in yesterday's reading, continues today. Yesterday we had the critique – fasting is of no avail without embracing social justice. Today we have the promise of the Lord's response to the prayers of a righteous people. Their light will

shine forth amidst the darkness, and the ruined city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt. The return from the Babylonian exile was in 539 BC, following the edict of Cyrus the Persian Emperor. Judah became a satrap of Persia and work on the rebuilding of the temple commenced. And yet it took another twenty years to complete. Meanwhile there was a new emphasis on the sabbath, hitherto simply a day of rest, but now increasingly seen as a holy day and a focus for religious practice.