

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

Pentecost

5th – 12th June 2022



Reflection *Pentecost*

PENTECOST presents us with a whole set of images, compelling ideas. The Holy Spirit, the Wind and Breath of God, filling the Upper Room.... The flames of fire descending on the heads of the apostles.... The gifts of languages, enabling people from all over the known world, to understand the words of the Gospel.... The apostles, emerging from their timid hideout behind locked doors, emboldened to preach and teach and heal, to confound and console and comfort.... It is the birthday of the Church, the day on which its divine energy is unleashed in the wider community. There is more traditional imagery around today. The white flowers of Whit Sun – White Sunday, the day for Confirmations. The Jewish feast of *Shavuot* – fifty days after the Passover (so, what we call Pentecost). On *Shavuot* the Giving of the Torah is commemorated and the Ten Commandments are solemnly read. The Jewish Pentecost at the time of Jesus was also a celebration of water, in a land in which neither irrigation nor adequate drinking water could be taken for granted. The great water pots of Pentecost were a reminder that water – symbolising the Holy Spirit – is a divine gift. When it is full to overflowing, so is God's Spirit in our hearts and lives.

The feast tells the story very simply and effectively. What we need to do is to allow the images and compelling ideas to refresh and irrigate our own lives and the life of the Church locally. The Holy Spirit, the Breath of God, the gift of communication, the courage the energy, the white flowers of Spring, the delight in the Law of God, the fonts and water pots overflowing, the joy of the Gospel. It is all here for us to be and become, in the words of Sherry Weddell, 'Intentional Disciples', not people who happen to believe in God, in the balance of probabilities, or who think of Christianity as just decent behaviour. We need to constantly relearn to pray and celebrate, to radiate joy and hope, to live for others and to the glory of God.

May we share again the Springtime of God's love and bring fresh life and energy to our Christian living, through the grace and power of God's Holy Spirit. 'Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.'

Fr Andrew

THE WEEK OF PENTECOST

5th – 12th June 2022

All masses live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendred
please book for Sunday masses: hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Church is open from 9am until late afternoon

PENTECOST

5th June

9.30am Parish Mass [Red]
Pro populo
11.15am Holy Mass at St Patrick's
12 noon Ecumenical Service Poplars' Field
6pm Holy Mass

Monday 6th June

Readings for Ordinary Time Week 10, Year 2
The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church [White]
9.15am Holy Mass

Tuesday 7th June

Of the Holy Spirit [Red]
9.15am Holy Mass *FM Dolly Boyce 1999*

Wednesday 8th June

Of the Holy Spirit [Red]
9.15am Holy Mass *FM Millie Charlton 1999*

Thursday 9th June

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest [White]
9.15am Holy Mass *St Amand's School Intentions*

Friday 10th June

Of the Holy Spirit [Red]
8.30am Holy Mass *FM Eddie Reevey 1999*

Saturday 11th June

St Barnabas, Apostle [Red]
No Mass

TRINITY SUNDAY

12th June

9.30am Parish Mass [White]
Pro populo
11.15am Holy Mass at St Patrick's
6pm Holy Mass

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk is monitored by the Parish Secretary.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S JUNE PRAYER INTENTION

We pray for Christian families around the world; may they embody and experience unconditional love and advance in holiness in their daily lives.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTION

Monday 6 th	Diocesan Team for Dialogue with Sectors
Tuesday 7 th	Parish Prayer Groups
Wednesday 8 th	Community of St William of York, Reading
Thursday 9 th	Community of St Colman, Cosham; Community of St Columba, Bridgemary; Chapel of St Thomas More, Park Place, Wickam; Work of Park Place Pastoral Centre, Knights of St Columba
Friday 10 th	Community of Corpus Christi, North End
Saturday 11 th	St Barnabas Society

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Baby Martha, Sid Wallace, 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 5th - 11th June: Edward Purcell, James George Goodman, Philip Dearlove, John Joshua Eyston, Kitty Connolly, John Dixie, James Higgins, Captain George Edward Eyston, Mary Moore.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

WE ARE restarting Children's Church later in June. This is being co-ordinated by Libby Holderness and she will be interested to hear from those who are happy to help. (To contact her, please email office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk and we shall pass it on). We need two volunteers per session but there are usually enough for this to be easily manageable. One volunteer needs to be a DBS-checked leader, confident to supervise the activities. The other needs to be a willing helper, probably the parent of an under-four-year old with more of a 'play and share' role. There is plenty of scope, however, for older adults to help.

Children's Church meets in St Mary's Parish Rooms, starting at 9.15am on Sunday, which enables parents to drop off and join the 9.30am Mass. At the beginning of the Offertory, the children will be escorted back to St Mary's to re-join their parents. Children under-four need to have a parent with them during the session.

Those who attend Children's Church and join Mass half-way through are fulfilling their Mass obligation.

The diocese suggests that Keystage 2 children, and particularly those who have made their First Communion, should attend Mass with their parents, so Children's Church is really for toddlers and Keystage 1 children.

Children's Church meets only during school term-times. During the holidays, especially or religious festivals, it is important for children to experience the whole of the Mass with their parents.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

NEW ANGLICAN RECTOR FOR HENDRED

[The Anglican churchwardens] are delighted to announce the appointment of the Revd Dr Nikolaj Christensen as [the] new Rector. Nikolaj is currently serving his curacy in the Parish of Iffley in Oxford. His Institution as Rector of Wantage Downs will take place in October (date to be confirmed), conditional upon DBS and other legal checks being completed. Nikolaj and Hannah are looking forward to moving into the Rectory in October after the birth of their second child.

We look forward to welcoming Nikolaj and his family to our village and hope ecumenical co-operation will continue to be enjoyable and fruitful.

COFFEE IN ST MARY'S PARISH ROOMS

Work is well-advanced on St Mary's Parish Rooms and we hope that in June we shall reopen. It is hoped to start coffee after 9.30am Mass in the newly refurbished rooms in June (date to be confirmed) We very much hope men and women will volunteer to join the coffee rota so that we can once again enjoy this friendly get together after Mass. For further information please contact Francia Kilgarriff on 07899675784.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 29th May 2022, 204 people viewed, 56 machines looking only at St Mary's. 32 of these were in the UK, 18 in the USA, six from other countries. 110 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL – CHANGE OF DATE

The next meeting will now be on Thursday 23rd June at 8pm. We shall meet (we hope) in St Mary's Parish Rooms. As the Council is reconstituted, in the first instance all those who took part in the Standing Committee during the pandemic are invited to this meeting.

East Hendred Catholic Parish



Pentecost (C)

Antiphons,

Prayers and

Readings

Entrance Antiphon

Spiritus Domini

The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world and that which contains all things understands what is said, alleluia.

Wis 1:7

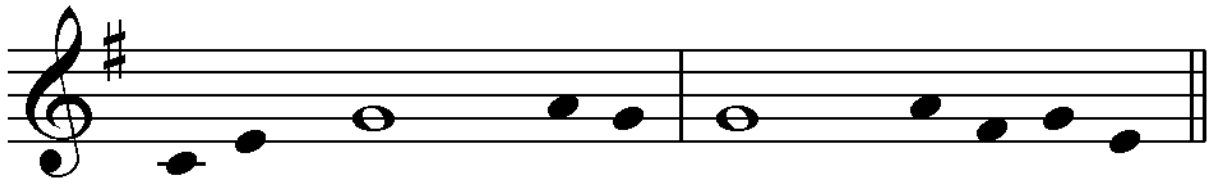
Collect

O God, who by the mystery of today's great feast sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers. 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

Acts 2:1-11(RSV)

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Par'thians and Medes and E'lamites and residents of Mesopota'mia, Judea and Cappado'cia, Pontus and Asia, Phryg'ia and Pamphyl'ia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyre'ne, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.'



R/ Send forth your spirit, O Lord : and renew the *face* of the earth.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!
 O Lord my God, *how* great you are.
 How many are your works O Lord!
 The earth is full *of* your creatures. *R/*

You hide your face, they are *dis-* mayed;
 You take away their breath *they* die,
 returning to the dust from which *they* came.
 You send forth your spirit, and they are created,
 and you renew the *face* of the earth. *R/*

May the glory of the Lord last for *e-* ver!
 May the Lord rejoice in *his* works!
 May my thoughts be pleasing *to* him.
 I will re-*joyce* in the Lord. *R/*

Second Reading

Romans 8:8-17 (RSV)

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh -- for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

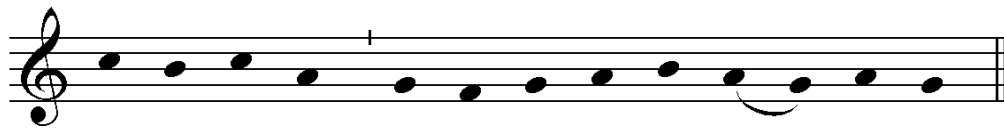
Sequence [part 1] (*Veni, sancte Spiritus*)

Come, thou holy Paraclete,
 And from thy celestial seat
 Send thy light and brilliancy:
 Father of the poor, draw near;
 Giver of all gifts, be here;
 Come, the soul's true radiancy:

2. Come, of comforters the best,
 Of the soul the sweetest guest,
 Come in toil refreshingly:
 Thou in labour rest most sweet,
 Thou art shadow from the heat,
 Comfort in adversity.

3. O thou Light, most pure and blest,
 Shine within the inmost breast
 Of thy faithful company.
 Where thou art not, man hath nought;
 Every holy deed and thought
 Comes from thy Divinity.

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



*Come, Ho-ly Spirit, fill the hearts of your faith-ful:
 and kindle in them the fire of your love.*

Gospel

John 14:15-16, 23-26 (RSV)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever... If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.'

Sequence [part 2] (*Veni, sancte Spiritus*)

4. What is soilèd, make thou pure;
 What is wounded, work its cure;
 What is parchèd, fructify;
 What is rigid, gently bend;
 What is frozen, warmly tend;
 Strengthen what goes erringly.

5. Fill thy faithful, who confide
 In thy power to guard and guide,
 With thy sevenfold Mystery.
 Here thy grace and virtue send:
 Grant salvation to the end,
 And in heaven felicity.
 Amen.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that, as promised by your Son, the Holy Spirit may reveal to us more abundantly the hidden mystery of this sacrifice and graciously lead us into all truth. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(De mysterio Pentecostes)

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, bringing your

Paschal Mystery to completion, you bestowed the Holy Spirit today on those you made your adopted children by uniting them to your Only begotten Son. This same Spirit, as the Church came to birth, opened to all peoples the knowledge of God and brought together the many languages of the earth in profession of the one faith. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim: Holy, holy, holy *etc.*

Communion Antiphon

Repleti sunt omnes

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke of the marvels of God, alleluia.

Prayer after Communion

O God, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your Church, safeguard, we pray, the grace you have given, that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her may retain all its force and that this spiritual food may gain her abundance of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

Go forth, the Mass is ended, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.
Ite, missa est, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

Thanks be to God, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.
Deo gratias, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

Scripture Reading (Year II, Week 10 *Per Annum*)

Monday	1 Kings 17:1-6	Matthew 5:1-12
Tuesday	1 Kings 17:7-16	Matthew 5:13-16
Wednesday	1 Kings 18:20-39	Matthew 5:17-19
Thursday	1 Kings 18:41-46	Matthew 5:20-26
Friday	1 Kings 19:9, 11-16	Matthew 5:27-32
Saturday	1 Kings 19:19-21	Matthew 5:33-37
TRINITY (C)	Proverbs 8:22-31	John 16:12-15
	Romans 5:1-5	

Revised Standard Version Bible, Ignatius Edition, copyright © 2006, by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

The English translation and chants of the Roman Missal © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved. Calamus Licence 2438 CCLI Church Copyright 20498 CCLI Music Reproduction Licence 490994 (size category B)

Revised Standard Version Bible, Ignatius Edition, copyright © 2006, by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

The English translation and chants of the Roman Missal © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Calamus Licence 2438; CCLI Church Copyright 20498; CCLI Music Reproduction Licence 490994 (size category B)

Ant.
6.
R

E-gí-na cáeli * læ-tá-re, alle-lú-ia: Qui- a
quem me-ru- ísti portá-re, alle-lú-ia: Re-surréx-it,
si-cut dix-it, alle-lú-ia: Ora pro no-bis De-um,
alle-lú- ia.

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluia.
he whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia.
as he promised hath arisen, alleluia.
pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluia.

V/ Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia:
R/ for the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

The Litany of the Sacred Heart

June is traditionally the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is the month in which we celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (on the first available Friday after Eastertide). Many find the Litany of the Sacred Heart helpful in their devotions.

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

**Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy**

God our Father in heaven
God the Son, Redeemer of the world
God the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity, one God

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Heart of Jesus, Son of the eternal Father
Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit
 in the womb of the Virgin Mother
Heart of Jesus, one with the eternal Word
Heart of Jesus, infinite in majesty
Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God
Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High
Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Heart of Jesus, aflame with love for us
Heart of Jesus, source of justice and love
Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love
Heart of Jesus, well-spring of all virtue
Heart of Jesus, worthy of all praise
Heart of Jesus, king and centre of all hearts
Heart of Jesus, treasure-house of wisdom and knowledge

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Heart of Jesus, in whom there dwells the fullness of God

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father is well pleased

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, from whose fullness we have all received

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, desire of the eternal hills

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, patient and full of mercy

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, generous to all who turn to you	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with insults	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, broken for our sins	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, obedient even to death	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, pierced by a lance	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, victim of our sins	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, salvation of all who trust in you	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, hope of all who die in you	have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints	have mercy on us

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	have mercy on us
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	have mercy on us
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	have mercy on us

V/ Jesus, gentle and humble of heart.
R/ **Touch our hearts and make them like your own.**

Let us pray.

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that we, who glory in the Heart of your beloved Son
and recall the wonders of his love for us,
may be made worthy to receive
an overflowing measure of grace
from that fount of heavenly gifts.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

6th – 11th June 2022

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

Whit Monday (Week 10[II])

6th June 2022

Collect

O GOD, Father of mercies, whose Only-begotten Son, as he hung upon the Cross, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Mother, to be our Mother also: grant, we pray, that with her loving help, your Church may be more fruitful day by day, and exulting in the holiness of her children, may draw to her embrace all the families of the peoples. 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. Amen.

Reading

1 Kings 17:1-6 (RSV)

Elijah predicts a drought

Now Eli'jah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.' ²And the word of the LORD came to him, ³'Depart from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, that is east of the Jordan. ⁴You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.' ⁵So he went and did according to the word of the LORD; he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. ⁶And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

Reflection

AS WE head for 'Ordinary Time', the 'Green Season', the cycle of readings takes us away from an emphasis on celebration to an emphasis on study and learning. And so we find ourselves heading towards the end of the First Book of the Kings. At this point, the stories of the major prophets begin and we encounter Elijah. There is a crisis going on: a drought is a particularly serious matter in a land where rainfall is scarce.

Putting the story in context, we are in the Northern Kingdom – Israel. North and South divided into two Kingdoms after the death of Solomon (922 BC). From 1 Kings 12 on to the end of 2 Kings, we have the history of the two Kingdoms until the destruction of Israel (724 BC) and the Babylonian Exile (587 BC), when Jerusalem is sacked and Judah is taken off to Babylon. In both Kingdoms, we have the story of – largely – weak and wicked Kings and the historian wastes no time in explaining political misfortune as the consequence of bad conduct.

Elijah was ministering at the time of a particularly evil King – Ahab – and, as the Northern Kingdom continues with its idolatrous ways, the consequence is drought. The point of today's story is that, despite everything, God provides for his faithful. Thus Elijah is given sufficient food and water and ravens bring him bread and meat. The Wadi Cherith – the brook – is a source of water until it dries up.

Until recently we tended to see problems of drought, famine, and plague as challenges for the developing world, as they were for the ancient world. One thing that our present difficulties have brought home to us afresh is our reliance on the natural order. Science and technology cannot insulate us entirely from the forces of nature. The promise holds good, however: God's love and care for us. This Providence does not protect us from every challenge: we don't live in an enchanted garden. It does sustain us – and assure us of salvation – as we face whatever difficulties come our way.

Tuesday after Pentecost

7th June

Collect for Week 10

O God, from whom all good things come: grant that we, who call on you in our need, may at your prompting discern what is right, and by your guidance do it. 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

1 Kings 17:7-16 (RSV)

The Widow of Zarephath

⁷And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. ⁸Then the word of the LORD came to him, ⁹'Arise, go to Zar'ephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.'¹⁰So he arose and went to Zar'ephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, 'Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.'¹¹And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, 'Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.'¹²And she said, 'As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a cruse; and now, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.'¹³And Eli'jah said to her, 'Fear not; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make for yourself and your son.'¹⁴For thus says the LORD the God of Israel, 'The jar of meal shall not be spent, and the cruse of oil shall not fail, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'¹⁵And she went and did as Eli'jah said; and she, and he, and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD which he spoke by Eli'jah.

Reflection

THE STORY of Elijah continues as does the drought which has brought the land to a crisis. We are in the middle of the ninth century BC, under the tyranny of the murderous King Ahab. Elijah had been surviving on food brought by ravens and with water from the Wadi Cherith. Finally, the

brook dries up and Elijah moves on to Zarephath. At the city gate he encounters a widow and asks her for bread and water. She doesn't refuse but makes it clear that there is enough only for a last meal for herself and her son and she is out collecting firewood to cook this meal. Elijah assures her that God will provide flour and oil for her and her son until the end of the drought. In fact it will be a year until the rains return. The widow responds with generosity to Elijah's request for food and, in response to this generosity, the Lord provides.

This simple little story of our dependence on God – 'Give us this day our daily bread' – is also at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount, an extract from which we hear as today's Gospel. We are called to be salt and light and to let our light so shine that others, seeing out good works, may glorify God. Across nearly thirty centuries – 3,000 years – the generous response of the Widow of Zarephath to Elijah's need continues to shine out. It is echoed in the Feeding of the 5,000 – where the bread and fish were sufficient for the crowds – and in many of the heroic efforts of the present day as charities such as CAFOD work to alleviate the effects of famine and drought.

Wednesday after Pentecost

8th June

Reading

1 Kings 18:20-39 (RSV)

Elijah's Triumph over the Prophets of Baal

²⁰ King Ahab sent to all the people of Israel, and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. ²¹ And Eli'jah came near to all the people, and said, 'How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Ba'al, then follow him.' And the people did not answer him a word. ²² Then Eli'jah said to the people, 'I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD; but Ba'al's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³ Let two bulls be given to us; and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; and I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, and put no fire to it. ²⁴ And you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, he is God.' And all the people answered, 'It is well spoken.' ²⁵ Then Eli'jah said to the prophets of Ba'al, 'Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for

you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it.' ²⁶ And they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning until noon, saying, 'O Ba'al, answer us!' But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped about the altar which they had made. ²⁷ And at noon Eli'jah mocked them, saying, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is musing, or he has gone aside, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.' ²⁸ And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹ And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice; no one answered, no one heeded.

³⁰ Then Eli'jah said to all the people, 'Come near to me'; and all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down; ³¹ Eli'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, 'Israel shall be your name'; ³² and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. ³³ And he put the wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, 'Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the wood.' ³⁴ And he said, 'Do it a second time'; and they did it a second time. And he said, 'Do it a third time'; and they did it a third time. ³⁵ And the water ran round about the altar, and filled the trench also with water.

³⁶ And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Eli'jah the prophet came near and said, 'O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. ³⁷ Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.' ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.'

Reflection

WHAT an exciting story – the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal! He, the Lord’s prophet, challenges the 450 pagan prophets to a trial of spiritual strength. Two bulls are prepared for sacrifice, one by the prophets of Baal and the other by Elijah, the Lord’s prophet. Elijah mocks the prophets of Baal – they hobble first on one leg and then on the other as they do their sacred dance. When no fire falls from heaven on their offering, Elijah taunts them. Perhaps their god is asleep, or on a journey. He then performs an act of spiritual derring-do. He convenes the people, builds an altar, puts the wood on it, dismembers the bull, then three times dowses the offering in water. After he has prayed, fire sweeps down from heaven and consumes the sacrifice. The people conclude that the Lord is God, the Lord indeed is God.

The importance of this story for us – a story from pre-history – is not that it is miraculous. It is impossible, at this distance, to know exactly what transpired. What we have is what is believed to have happened: an undoubted contest between the false religion of Baal – with its 450 prophets doing their best to conjure up fire for their sacrifice – and the true religion of Israel, where the sovereign God does what is humanly-speaking impossible, with only one prophet to offer prayer. The religion of Baal was one of the prevalent cults of the Canaanites, amidst whom the Israelites had come to live, forcing their way in by conquest. Its equivalent nowadays is not any one of the non-Christian faiths – since, unlike the early Israelites, we now know that there is only one God. The trial of strength we have with the prophets of Baal is nowadays the argument we have with those of a secular disposition, who discount religious truth. These secular prophets sometimes outnumber us but in the spiritual life we find ourselves saying, ‘The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.’

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest

Thursday after Pentecost , 9th June

Collect

O God, who for the glory of your majesty and the salvation of the human race, made your Only Begotten Son the Eternal High Priest, grant that, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, those whom he has chosen as ministers and stewards of his mysteries may be found faithful in carrying out the ministry they have received. 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 10:4–10 (RSV)

It is written of me in the roll of the book: I have come to do your will, O God.

For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God," as it is written of me in the roll of the book.' When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'Lo, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Reflection

AS A CHILD, I used to hear today's passage from Hebrews, chapter 10, read on Good Friday. It was clear that neither I – nor indeed the reader, who was the head server at the church – had the slightest idea what any of it meant. So, let's have a go. Let's start with the Entrance Antiphon at Mass, based on Hebrews 7:24; 9,15. This proclaims that 'Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, has an eternal priesthood because he remains for ever.' Here is a bundle of special terms: 'Christ' (the Lord's Anointed) is 'Mediator' (the go-between or priest between humans and the Divine) of the 'New Covenant' (a new and lasting agreement between

humanity and the Divine). Elsewhere in that chapter (Heb 7) we learn that Christ is 'High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.' Melchizedek, a figure from pre-history, was the mysterious king of Salem and priest of the Most High God who brings out bread and wine and then blesses Abram [not yet called 'Abraham'] (Gen 14). The point about Melchizedek is that he was an early figure, not part of a dynasty or family of priests, a king moreover, and, as we notice, involved not in the sacrificial slaughter of animals but in the offering of bread and wine. Christ is the one and only descendant of Melchizedek's priesthood and his priesthood does away with the sacrificial offerings of the Jewish priesthood, the constant animal sacrifice, and replaces it with the once-and-for-all sacrifice of the Cross.

Complicated though this language is – and however primitive some of the concepts – we are helped to grapple with the basic idea of 'atonement'. Atonement – 'at-one-ment' – is how two fundamentally different things can become one. A good example is a salad dressing. Oil and vinegar can never be reconciled – they are essentially different from each other – but they can be brought together, much as, in Christ, we have the hypostatic union of godhead and humanity. But, if atonement is what we are trying to describe, how best do we describe the process? To describe the bringing together of what is inherently perfect (God) with what is inherently imperfect (human existence), we need One who is both God and human. Jesus the Great High Priest was 'one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning' (Heb 4:15).

When we talk of sinlessness and sin, immortality and mortality, eternal life and death, perfection and imperfection, we end up with language of expiation, propitiation, sacrifice and sin-offerings. The Epistle to the Hebrews may be remote and strange, viewed from the secular present, but it is striking, nonetheless, that so many of these old ideas have found the way into our everyday thinking about penalties and retribution, not to mention notions of self-sacrifice and vicarious suffering. The figure of Christ the Great High Priest gives all of this shape, purpose, and meaning, and if we bring alongside the imagery of the Incarnation, we begin to make sense of it all. We reflect on the Christmas antiphon *O admirabile commercium*: O admirable exchange: the creator of humankind, taking on a living body...gave us his divinity. Or, as is said during the Offertory at Mass: 'By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.'

Friday after Pentecost

10th June

Reading

1 Kings 19:9, 11-16 (RSV)

Elijah Meets God at Horeb

⁹ And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, 'What are you doing here, Eli'jah?'

¹¹ And he said, 'Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD.' And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ And when Eli'jah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him, and said, 'What are you doing here, Eli'jah?' ¹⁴ He said, 'I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.' ¹⁵ And the LORD said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall anoint Haz'ael to be king over Syria; ¹⁶ and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel; and Eli'sha the son of Shaphat of A'bel-meho'lah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.

Reflection

THIS morning's is the last of our extracts from the story of Elijah this week. It describes a revelation of fundamental importance in the development of spirituality throughout the ages. It is the mainspring of the Carmelite movement which is present with us in this area in the Friary on Boars Hill. At the end of his ministry Elijah discovers that, though he experiences wind, an earthquake, and a fire, in none of these is the Lord to be found. God does not disclose himself through the forces of nature, even though his glory is evident in creation. After wind, earthquake, and fire there is a still, small voice. It is the still, small voice that we get to in Psalm 46, when, after speaking of the power of God to intervene in the

world, we have this same still, small voice. 'Be still, and know that I am God...The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.' The theme is taken up famously in the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind'. John Greenleaf Whittier, an American Quaker poet, wrote these words and they include:

**Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.**

St Barnabas

Saturday 11th June

Collect

O God, who decreed that Saint Barnabas, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, should be set apart to convert the nations: grant that the Gospel of Christ, which he strenuously preached, may be faithfully proclaimed by word and by deed. 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

Acts 11:21-26; 13:1-3 (RSV)

Barnabas: a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith

²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. ²² News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose; ²⁴ for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large company was added to the Lord. ²⁵ So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; ²⁶ and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians....

13 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Symeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyre'ne, Man'a-en a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Reflection

TODAY we leave on one side the story of Elijah and turn our attention to St Barnabas. Our first reading is two extracts from the story of Paul and Barnabas. Though we are nearly halfway through the Acts of the Apostles, we notice that Paul is still called Saul and the mission of the Church, which encompassed Gentiles in Acts 10, is only now in Acts 11 beginning to move beyond the Holy Land and become established further afield. It was in Antioch, we hear, that the disciples are first called 'Christians'. Our second extract, from Acts 13, tells us something about this infant Church on Antioch. There are a few prophets and teachers, one of whom at least was a person of substance, a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch. It was in Antioch that the laying on of hands – what we now call 'ordination' – on Barnabas and Saul took place. A few verses later we first come across St Luke in Acts describing the leaders of the Church in Antioch as *presbyteroi*, presbyters, a term used earlier for Jewish elders.

Without the context, we could be mistaken for thinking that these developments are some kind of strategy for church growth. In fact, a couple of verses before the passage begins, we read of 'those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen'. In short, much that happens in the life of the Church is not planned or thought through but a reaction – sometimes a panic reaction – to events. Life will change for us in many ways – some far-reaching and some small – as a result of current events. None of this is the result of planning or thinking but, as with the Early Church, God works through setbacks and disasters to bring about his sovereign purposes.