

**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

20th – 26th November 2022

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979
aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Andrew is usually available to speak to after Mass.

Arrangements for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals or other meetings are most conveniently made by e-mail.

Ma Lluïsa Jarne: office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk or at one of the St Mary's Sunday masses or on Mondays, 6pm-8pm, on 07983045824.

GIVING TO THE PARISH

BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT

BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183

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

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

WEEK 34 YEAR 2

20th – 27th November 2022

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

SUNDAY 34C
20th November

CHRIST THE KING

9.15am Children's Church
(begins in St Mary's Parish Rooms)

9.30am Parish Mass

11.15am Mass at St Patrick's

6pm Holy Mass *FM Canon Luck 1919*

WEEK 34 (Year 2)
Monday 21st

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
No Mass

Tuesday 22nd

St Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr *[red]*
 9.15am Holy Mass *FM Annie Maud Eyston 1943*

Wednesday 23rd

St Clement I, Pope, Martyr *[red]*
 9.15am Holy Mass
FM Henry Lester Louis Morris 1963

Thursday 24th

St Andrew Dung-Lac, Priest, & Companions *[red]*
 9.15am School Mass *FM Fanny Gorton 1937*

Friday 25th

St Catherine of Alexandria. Virgin, Martyr *[red]*
 8.30am Holy Mass **(St Mary's)**
FM Charles Gorton 1937

3pm Adoration (St Mary's)

Saturday 26th

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

SUNDAY
27th November

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT *YEAR OF MATTHEW [A]*
9.15am Children's Church
(begins in St Mary's Parish Rooms)

9.30am Parish Mass

11.15am Mass at St Patrick's

5pm Ecumenical Advent Carols and Readings

6pm Sung Mass

Confessions: after Mass (weekdays) or by appointment

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



NOVEMBER IS THE MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

THE HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR NOVEMBER

We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be guaranteed access to education and the opportunity to experience family affection.

NATIONAL & DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTIONS

Sunday 20 th	<i>(National:)</i> Young People (National Youth Sunday) <i>(Diocesan:)</i> Christ the King, Reading Chapel of Christ the King, Sandhurst
Monday 21 st	Parish of St Edward, Windsor
Tuesday 22 nd	All musicians in the Diocese and the National Network of Pastoral Musicians
Wednesday 23 rd	Parish Youth Clubs & Youth Groups
Thursday 24 th	Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino Chaplaincies in the Diocese
Friday 25 th	Diocesan devotions to St Colman of Cloyne
Saturday 26 th	Parishes, Communities & Schools in the Southampton Pastoral Area

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Martha, Diana France, Helen Lewis, John Castle, Daniel Cuevas, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Brenda Paddon, Karen Greig, Mary McNichol, Des McNichol

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 20th– 26th November: Anthony Francis Castle, Cornelia Purcell, Patrick Kelly, Lilian Purcell.

EAST Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Sunday 27 th November:	5pm Advent Lessons and Carols at St Mary's <i>[followed by 6pm Mass]</i>
Wednesdays in Advent:	8.45am Morning Prayer at St Mary's
Fridays in Advent:	5pm Evening Prayer at St Augustine's
Friday 23 rd December:	6.30pm Christmas Lessons and Carols at St Augustine's

ADVENT SUNDAY

Next Sunday is the First Sunday of Advent, known as Advent Sunday, and is the beginning of the Church's Year. The Sunday Lectionary is Year A, the Year of Matthew, and the Weekday Lectionary will be Year 1.

ST MARY'S FEAST

On Thursday 8th December there will be Mass for the Immaculate Conception at 6pm followed by a St Mary's Feast at The Wheatsheaf. The cost will be £15 per head for a two-course meal, roast beef or roast chicken, followed by apple crumble or cheese cake. Sign up at the back of St Mary's.

SECOND COLLECTION

A second collection for **MARY'S MEALS** will be taken today (20th November).

HENDRED HOUSE CHAPEL

Hendred House Chapel is closed for building works. This week there will be no Friday Mass and 3pm Adoration will take place in St Mary's.

COLDS AND FLU?

Stay home and watch the livestream! Details on www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

STEWARDING AT 9.30AM

We have a vacant slot in the rota every five or six weeks. Could you, or your family, take this on? If so, contact Ma Louise on office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 13th November 2022, 183 people viewed, 63 machines looking only at St Mary's. 33 of these were in the UK, 23 in the USA, and 7 elsewhere. 109 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

HOMES FOR PEOPLE DISPLACED BY WAR IN UKRAINE

Are you able to help the Catholic Charity *Caritas*?
<https://sjog-homesforukraine.uk/>

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH

Information from the Bishop and Portsmouth Diocese. To keep up to date with the news of the Diocese and the Bishop:
<https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/>

DAVE AND GEMMA

I have asked Dave and Gemma, a couple at St Mary's who got married on 12th November to head up and liaise our work with young adults. If you are interested in any of the things below – or other activities – have a word with them. They can be reached on davegem2022@gmail.com

FLAME

Flame, the largest youth gathering of Catholics, is taking place at the OVO Arena, Wembley on Saturday 4th March 2023, with the theme 'Rise Up!' All young people, whether from the parish, at school (Year 9 or older), or at university are welcome. Loud music, bright lights, moments of stillness..... Any questions? Contact youth@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or phone 07780 221686.

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023

Those aged 16 or above by July 2023 are invited to join with like-minded young people from across the diocese to journey on pilgrimage to Lisbon for World Youth Day. This is a life-changing experience for all those who accept the invitation and this pilgrimage, led by Bishop Philip, is set to be the best one yet! But hurry, spaces are limited! Plans are in the early stages, but we will provide more information and details as soon as possible. For further information, see the posters in church, or please email wyd@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK

Escorted Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, Ireland, 15th March 2023. £699.00 per person sharing. Price includes flight, all transfers, 4 nights' in Knock House Hotel with full board. Special St Patrick's Day Celebrations. Single supplement £150.00. Contact Patricia on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

BRINGING PEOPLE CLOSER TO JESUS CHRIST THROUGH HIS CHURCH

To go out on mission to everyone.

'Go, make disciples of all nations. ' (Matthew 28:19)

That we enable many more to hear the Gospel and to come to know, serve and love Jesus Christ in the saving communion of His Catholic Church, so that, persevering in faith, hope and charity, they may one day reach the happiness of Heaven.

To convert Catholics.

'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, lives in me, and I live in him.'
(John 6:55-56)

That we assist all Catholics, especially those who are not yet practising, to reach a deeper personal relationship with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, to be more intentional disciples and, discerning their charisms, to become more actively engaged in the Church's mission.

To be totally dependent on the Holy Spirit.

'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.' (Acts 1:8)

That shifting from maintenance to mission, we trust more completely in God through prayer, imploring the Holy Spirit to inspire our clergy and our laity with constant joy and creativity to develop and realise new, innovative ministries and ways of Christian living.

To become outward-looking servants.

'In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40)

That all our parish and our school communities become ever more outward-facing service-centres, brighter beacons of mission, dialogue and service to everyone around, especially to the poor, the homeless, those in need.

*Rt. Rev. Philip Egan BA, STL, PhD
Bishop of Portsmouth*



East Hendred, at last count, now has pledges for £94,575. Thank you for this magnificent response. We are still open to receive further pledges.

Welcome to the latest edition of the ***Closer to Christ*** Campaign Weekly Newsletter.

This week we can share that over 1,000 families have now made a pledge to the Campaign! We are truly delighted with this achievement and the sacrifices people continue to make for this vital initiative.

We also announced recently that the annual Mass of Thanksgiving will be held on 2nd December this year, so please remember to rsvp if you are able to attend. More details can be found [here](#).

We do hope you all enjoyed the Feast Day on Wednesday, in honour of our patron St Edmund of Abingdon.

Thank you for your support.

Closer to Christ Campaign Team

Year of Prayer to the Holy Spirit

IN HIS Pastoral Letter on 16th October 2022, Bishop Philip presented us with the challenge to 'to establish or pledge to develop six holy habits':

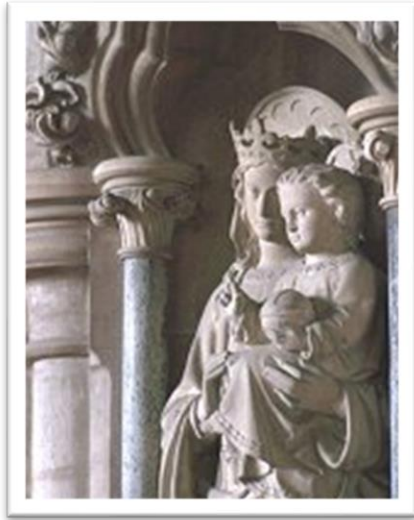
- to keep Sunday special, a family day, by attending Mass.
- to spend five minutes a day in prayer using the Scriptures
- to do penance on Fridays, and to serve the poor and needy
- every fortnight to make a Holy Half Hour before the Blessed Sacrament
- to go to Confession once a month
- join a small group for formation, prayer, and fellowship

AS WE prepare for this Year of Prayer, which will begin on the First Sunday of Advent (27th November), we look at these 'holy habits' in turn. So.....

(5) To go to Confession once a month

Bishop Philip recommends a once-a-month 'holy habit' of Confession which, for most of us, would be a sharp increase. The requirement of the Church is that we go to Confession at least once a year and, in cases of mortal sin, before going to Holy Communion. Some people vastly prefer making their Confession with a priest whom they do not know. Others prefer to deal with a priest they do know. Some people prefer the anonymity of the Confessional. Others prefer the pastoral encounter of seeing, and being seen by, the priest. We are all different. Confessions in this parish are by arrangement or after Mass. Many have found the Advent and Lent Penitential Services organised around the Pastoral Area helpful and convenient ways of preparing for Christmas and Easter. There is much embarrassment about Confession amongst those who do not go regularly. Three things: the priest has heard it all before, many times, such is the banality of sin; the priest is himself a sinner and is only too happy to help you through it, step-by-step; the priest is obliged to maintain confidentiality even to the extent of not revealing who may or may not have been to confession.

East Hendred Catholic Parish



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING (C)

20th November 2022

Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings

Entrance Antiphon

Dignus est Agnus

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.

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

2 Samuel 5:1-3 (RSV)

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, 'Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you that led out and brought in Israel; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'" So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

Gospel Acclamation



Bles-sings on him who comes in the name *of* the Lord!

Blessings on the coming kingdom of our *fa - ther* Da-vid!

Gospel

Luke 23:35-43 (RSV)

The people stood by, watching; but the rulers scoffed at Jesus, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.' One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power.' And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

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.

Communion Antiphon

Sedebit Dominus Rex

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

Ps 29:10-11

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

Liturgical Hymns 597

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

Scripture Reading (Week 34 Year 2)

Monday	Revelation 14:1-5	Luke 21:1-4
Tuesday	Revelation 14:14-19	Luke 21:5-11
Wednesday	Revelation 15:1-4	Luke 21:12-19
Thursday	Revelation 18:1-2, 21-23, 19:1-3, 9	Luke 21:20-28
Friday	Revelation 20:1-4, 11-21:2	Luke 21:29-33
Saturday	Revelation 22:1-7	Luke 21:34-36

ADVENT SUNDAY (YEAR A)

Isaiah 2:1-5

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:37-44

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

21st– 26th November 2022 Week 34[ii]

Collect for Week 34

STIR UP the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord, that striving more eagerly to bring your divine work to fruitful completion, they may receive in greater measure the healing remedies your kindness bestows. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Monday 21st November

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Reading

Rev 14:1-5

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers playing on their harps, ³and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless.

Reflection

TO MAKE sense of today's reading from Revelation 14, we need to look first at chapter 13. We learnt last week that the Apocalypse may date from the 90s. The Emperor Domitian died in AD96 and he notoriously persecuted Christians. As we said last week, it has been suggested that the Number of the Beast, 666, which figures in chapter 13 verse 18, expressed in Roman Numerals as DCLXVI, stood for Domitian, an absolute dictator and a notorious persecutor of Christians. Expressed in Roman numerals, 666 is DCLXVI—*Domitius Caesar Legatos Xti Violenter Interfecit*—which translates as 'The Emperor Domitian violently killed the ambassadors of Christ.' But it's possible, that the Roman Emperor referred to is not Domitian but Nero, who ruled from AD54 to AD68. This would fit with the number of the beast written in Hebrew, with numbers expressed as letters, and consonants adding up to 666. With these different theories we cannot get very much further than saying that the First Beast of chapter 13, with ten horns and seven heads, refers to empires and kings and the seven hills of Rome. The Second Beast in chapter 13 is a parody of Emperor-worship, promoted by a pagan priesthood. The two Beasts represent considerable adversity and discouragement for the Christian community of Asia Minor and it is for that reason that the woes of chapter 13 are followed by the consolation of chapter 14.

In today's reading, we pick up once more the themes of the heavenly worship, which were there in the reading from chapter 4 a week ago. 'God' and 'the Lamb' are distinguished – Father and Son – and the four living creatures and twenty-four elders are once more in attendance on the throne of God. There are twelve times twelve faithful Christians – 144,000 – all marked with the name of the Father and of the Lamb. This is to reassure the persecuted Christian community that they will endure through and survive the tribulations of the present. There is a mention of harp music – a sign of the ethereal – and although the reference to chastity is defined in terms of sexual purity, its literal meaning, it has been suggested that the chastity referred to is refraining from going along with idolatry. Infidelity to God in the Bible is not infrequently associated with images of adultery and immoral living.

Tuesday 22nd November

St Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr

Reading

Rev 14:14-19

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, 'Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.' ¹⁶ So he who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

¹⁷ And another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has power over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, 'Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.' ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

Reflection

OMITTED from our semi-continuous reading of the Book of Revelation are the solemn admonitions of three angels, stressing the need to glorify God in view of the Day of Judgment. There is woe in store for Babylon – that is for Rome – and a warning that apostates and idolaters will endure hell. This leads us to today's reading, when the sickle of wrath is wielded and the harvest of the earth is thrown into the great wine press of God's wrath. The imagery is from Joel 3:12-13, where the harvest and vintage put an end to the pagan nations. It is not uncommon as a metaphor for judgment – Is 17:5; Jer 51:33; Mt 13:30, 39; Mt 27:12 – hence the sickle rather than the sword. The phrase 'one like a son of man' describes the one who does the reaping and, though it is not here a proper name for Christ, he is the one to whom we are referring. The imagery is from the Book of Daniel (Dan 7:13) and we met him thus described in Rev 1:13. Particularly at this time of year, we are reminded of Charles

Wesley's hymn 'Lo! He comes with clouds descending' and, of course, of the ending of Christ coming in judgment, professed in the Creed, and spelt out in the farewell discourse of St Mark's Gospel (chapter 13). Both in St Mark and in Revelation the Second Coming of Christ and the judgment of the nations seemed imminent. We now know that this end-event is probably not imminent but that we need to live as though it were.

Wednesday 23rd November

(St Clement I, Pope, Martyr)

Reading

Rev 15:1-4

The Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb

15 Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

² And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. ³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

'Great and wonderful are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the ages!

⁴ Who shall not fear and glorify your name, O Lord?
For you alone are holy.
All nations shall come and worship you,
for your judgments have been revealed.'

Reflection

WITH the sea of glass the prophet is once more in heaven, with the heavenly cast whom we have already met. The harps are a symbol of worship and the congregation for the heavenly worship are those who

have conquered in the fight, all 144,000 of them. The beast and its image and the number of its name are all vanquished. The song which they sing is called the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb but, unlike the Song of Moses in Exodus 15, this song does not rejoice in the downfall of its foes but in the glory of God. Nevertheless, linking Moses and the Lamb, the song links the two deliverances, the deliverance from the Egyptians and the deliverance from the pagan nations. The phrases of the Song are drawn from Old Testament verses: Psalms 111:2; 139:14; Amos 4:13; Ps 145:17; Deut 32:4; Jer 10:7; Ps 86:9; Mal 1:11; Ps 98:2. We set against the terrifying imagery of the Apocalypse its huge optimism that the battle has been fought and won and that we are now in 'finishing time'.

Thursday 24th November *(Week 34[ii])*

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

ST ANDREW Dung-Lac (1795-1839) was a Vietnamese martyr, beheaded at Hanoi. He was one in a long line of martyrs, 117 in all, who were murdered between 1625 and 1886. 21 of them were foreign missionaries. They were canonised in 1988.

Collect

O GOD, source and origin of all fatherhood, who kept the Martyrs Saint Andrew Dung-Lac and his companions faithful to the Cross of your Son, even to the shedding of their blood: grant, through their intercession, that, spreading your love among our brothers and sisters, we may be your children both in name and in truth. 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

Rev 18:1-2, 21-23, 19:1-3, 9

The Fall of Babylon and the Rejoicing in Heaven

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendour. ² And he called out with a mighty voice,

'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!
It has become a dwelling place of demons,
a haunt of every foul spirit,
a haunt of every foul and hateful bird;....

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

'So shall Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence,
and shall be found no more;
22 and the sound of harpers and minstrels, of flute players and trumpeters,
shall be heard in you no more;
and a craftsman of any craft
shall be found in you no more;
and the sound of the millstone
shall be heard in you no more;
23 and the light of a lamp
shall shine in you no more;
and the voice of bridegroom and bride
shall be heard in you no more;
for your merchants were the great men of the earth,
and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.

19 After this I heard what seemed to be the mighty voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying,

'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
² for his judgments are true and just;
he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication,
and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants.'

³ Once more they cried,
'Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.'.... ⁹ And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.'

Reflection

YESTERDAY we had the Song of Moses and the Lamb because we were celebrating the winning of the battle, the final victory of God over the forces of evil. This theme continues today – two or three chapters later - with a rather gleeful account of the disaster which has befallen pagan Rome. We have missed out the seven bowls of God's wrath, which are like the plagues which befell Egypt at the time of the Exodus. The final plague leads to the destruction of Rome, whose fate we should have lingered over in chapter 17. It is small wonder that various Protestant Christians, hostile to Catholicism, have seen the denunciations of pagan Rome in the Book of Revelation as prophetic of the fate of Roman Catholicism. But, it has to be said, the enemy in Revelation is paganism and an empire which persecutes and martyrs Christians. In today's reading, we have another heavenly canticle, preceded by declarations by two mighty angels, different from John's angel-guide. When we hear of salvation, what we are really hearing about is victory.

Friday 25th November *(Week 34[ii])*

(St Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin and Martyr)

ST CATHERINE of Alexandria was a fourth century well-to-do woman in Alexandria, Egypt, who, after refusing to worship pagan gods, was martyred. She defended the faith in debate with philosophers. Sometimes known as St Catherine of the Wheel – the instrument of torture and execution – she died under the Emperor Maxentius. Legend says that her body was taken to Mount Sinai by angels and a monastery (which is still there) was built in her honour

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who gave Saint Catherine of Alexandria to your people as a Virgin and an invincible Martyr: grant that, through her intercession, we may be strengthened in faith and constancy and spend ourselves without reserve for the unity of the Church. 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

Rev 20:1-4, 11-21:2

The Thousand Years, the Dead are Judged, and the New Jerusalem is revealed

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. ²And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.....

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; ¹⁵ and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;

Reflection

WE STAY with the victory which we have been exploring for the last couple of days and, with the victory, comes the end of Satan, his utter vanquishing. The faithful departed come back to life and we are at the throne of judgment. The deeds of the faithful are revealed, as they are written in the Book of Life, and Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire, as are any whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life. Then is revealed the new heaven and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem, prepared as a bride for her husband. The Marriage Feast of the Lamb is about to commence.

Saturday 26th November (*Week 34[ii]*)

Reading

Revelation 22:1-7

The River of Life

22 Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life^[a] with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **3** There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; **4** they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. **5** And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said to me, 'These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. **7** And behold, I am coming soon.' Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

Reflection

ON THIS, the last day of the Church's Year, we finish in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible. We are not quite at the end: there is an epilogue and benediction which fittingly balances the opening of the book, its salutation and opening vision. But we are at what feels like the end of the book. We encounter the River of the Water of Life and the beatific vision amidst eternal Light.
