

**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

Week 16B *Per Annum*

18th-25th July 2021



The Good Shepherd: Ravenna Mosaics

Jesus called to him the twelve, .. ¹² So they went out and preached.

Mark 6:7, 12 (RSV)

PASSED on through Sherry Weddell's 'Forming Intentional Disciples' Facebook page: advice for Catholics on how, as disciples of Christ, we should share our Christian Faith. The advice was originally from a Baptist pastor:

1. Don't assume an antagonistic viewpoint.

People are well-disposed, often say that they aren't interested in religion, but are very interested in spirituality. It often emerges that they know very little indeed about the Christian Gospel but are a bit intrigued about Catholics.

2. Model how life and faith intersect.

What really speaks about our faith is what difference it makes to our lives. The teacher who teaches because she feels a calling to teach. The doctor or nurse motivated by faith. The person with a job not remotely connected to a sense of calling – or no job at all – but who frames their working life and their family life round the basic routines of practising the faith. Friends and neighbours – as well as family – can see how our lives and faith work out. Are we letting them see it?

3. Allow others to belong to community before they believe the Gospel fully.

We know that not everyone who comes to Mass is a Catholic and not everyone who comes to Church is a paid-up Christian. But 'belonging' often comes first and 'believing' much later. Everyone is welcome and we welcome everyone.

4. Share your story.

Sharing our story is not a matter of explaining Catholic doctrine. The Creeds. The teachings of the Church. Our story – the one we share – is the story of how God has been with us and helped us. That's the story that people need to hear.

5. Pray.

Prayer is not the last thing on the list but where things begin. People are astounded if they discover that we actually talk to God – use words, and often everyday language. Some, less comfortable with everyday language, prefer silence, unspoken thoughts, feelings, formal prayers. But we can't hope to make headway with others if we don't hold them up to God in prayer. Prayer, as Jesus taught us, begins with the 'Our Father'.

Fr Andrew

WEEK 16 YEAR 1

18th – 25th July 2021

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

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

SUNDAY 16B <i>Per Annum</i>			[Green]
18th July	9.30am 6pm	Parish Mass Holy Mass	<i>Pro populo</i>

Monday 19th July	<i>Feria</i> 9.15am	Votive Mass of the Holy Trinity <i>FM Sir William Weston 1937</i>	[White]
Tuesday 20th July	<i>Feria</i> 9.15am	Mass for the Progress of Peoples (29.) <i>FM Edward Monk 1966</i>	[Green]
Wednesday 21st July	<i>Feria</i> 9.15am	Votive Mass of all the Holy Apostles <i>FM Louisa Goddard 1967</i>	[White]
Thursday 22nd July	St Mary Magdalen 9.15am	Holy Mass <i>FM Rev. Michael Mahon 1999</i>	[White]
Friday 23rd July	St Bridget of Sweden, Religious, Patron of Europe 9.15am	Holy Mass	[White] <i>Holy Souls</i>
Saturday 24th July	<i>Our Lady St Mary on Saturday</i> <i>No Mass</i>		[White]

SUNDAY 17B <i>Per Annum</i>			[Green]
25th July	9.30am 6pm	Parish Mass Holy Mass	<i>Pro populo</i>

CONTACT DETAILS

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hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

BOOKING FOR MASS

Please book for 9.30am Sunday Masses before 12 noon on Fridays hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk On Saturday contact Fr Andrew on aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

There is now no need to book for the 6pm Mass. As with the weekday morning masses, demand does not outstrip supply. Nonetheless we are required to carefully note who comes, in case of infection alerts, and so we ask you to sign in on Sunday night and sit as allocated by the steward.

CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 11th July, there were 248 hits from 65 machines, with 107 remaining on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 45 machines were in the UK, 10 in Ireland, 8 in the rest of the world.

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

CHARITY: WANTAGE

Jackymattam@btinternet.com helps with the poor locally. Contact her about what practical help she needs. It is usually children's clothes &c.

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

We have about 15 regular contributors a month for whom we are not able to claim Gift Aid, at least at present. 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

GOOD COUNSEL NETWORK

The 11th Annual GK Chesterton Walking Pilgrimage will take place on Saturday (24th July 2021). You can sponsor Stuart McCullough as he raises funds for Good Counsel on this 27 mile walk here:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/gkcwalk21

You can email prayer intentions to be prayed for along the way to;

catholicgkcsociety@yahoo.co.uk

You can join us for Mass or part of the walk on the day or even just join us by saying the GK Chesterton Prayer on the day wherever you are. Find details and the prayer in a number of languages here

www.catholicgkchestertonsociety.co.uk

CHILDREN'S LITURGY DURING THE SUMMER

There will no longer be special Children's Prayers at 9am on Sunday and, in place of the weekly pages we have been publishing, we are offering access to a website of the SDC Children's Liturgy Resource. All you need to do is click on this link: <http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/>

YOUNG CATHOLICS

The **Fanning the Flame Camp for Young Catholics, age 12 - 18**, will take place Monday 16th - Fri 20th August. If you are interested, details at www.fanningtheflame.co.uk Cost £130. It is usually held at the Dominican Priory in the New Forest but this year it will be at the Kintbury Retreat Centre, near Newbury. If you would like to support teenagers whose families struggle to pay for this camp, then please consider making a donation to sr.veronicabrennan@gmail.com

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

Are you in the habit of looking up and using our website? This Bulletin appears each week on the website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

Many people look for occasional updates on our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.



FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S JULY PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that, in social, economic and political situations of conflict, we may be courageous and passionate architects of dialogue and friendship.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 18th - 24th July: Elizabeth Jane Lineham, James Heron, Violet Castle, Charles Turberville Eyston, Theresa Ayles

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Sixteenth
Sunday in Ordinary
Time (B)**

18th July 2021

**Antiphons,
Prayers and
Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Ecce Deus adiuvat me

See, I have God for my help. The Lord sustains my soul. I will sacrifice to you with willing heart, and praise your name, O God, for it is good.

Ps 53:6, 8

Collect

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commandments. 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

Jeremiah 23:1-6 (RSV)

23 'Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!' says the LORD. ² Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: 'You have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³ Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴ I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵ 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and

shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

Psalm 23

**R/ The Lord is my shepherd;
 there is nothing I shall want.**

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
he revives my soul. **R/**

He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff
will give me comfort. **R/**

You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **R/**

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending. **R/**

Second Reading

Ephesians 2:13-18 (RSV)

In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, **alleluia**. The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice, says the Lord: I know them and they follow me. **Alleluia**.

Gospel

Mark 6:30-34 (RSV)

The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³² And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. ³³ Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ As he landed he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Prayer over the Offerings

O God, who in the one perfect sacrifice brought to completion varied offerings of the law, accept, we pray, this sacrifice from your faithful servants and make it holy, as you blessed the gifts of Abel, so that what each has offered to the honour of your majesty may benefit the salvation of all. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

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 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.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

after St Alphonsus Liguori (18th cent.)

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

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

Communion Antiphon

Memoriam fecit

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful, has made a memorial of his wonders; he gives food to those who fear him.

Ps 110:4-5

Prayer after Communion

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life. Through Christ our Lord.

Salve Regina

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 16[I] Per Annum)

Monday	Exodus 14:5-18	Matthew 12:38-42
Tuesday	Exodus 14:21 - 15:1	Matthew 12:46-50
Wednesday	Exodus 16:1-5, 9-15	Matthew 13:1-9
Thursday	Exodus 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20	Matthew 13:10-17
Friday	Exodus 20:1-17	Matthew 13:18-23
Saturday	Exodus 24:3-8	Matthew 13:24-30
SUNDAY 17B	2 Kings 4:42-44 Ephesians 4:1-6	John 6:1-15

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

19th – 23rd July 2021

Monday in Week 16 *Per Annum [Year 1]*

19th July

Reading

Exodus 14:5-18 (RSV)

The Israelites are pursued by the Egyptian Army

⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, 'What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?' ⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, ⁷ and took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. ⁸ And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly. ⁹ The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-ha-hi'roth, in front of Ba'al-zephon.

¹⁰ When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were in great fear. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD; ¹¹ and they said to Moses, 'Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, in bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' ¹³ And Moses said to the people, 'Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be still.' ¹⁵ The LORD said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea. ¹⁷ And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his

host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have got glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.'

Reflection

THERE is quite a discussion amongst scholars as to whether the Exodus from Egypt actually happened. There is a strong case for saying that the event is legendary rather than historical: there is no record of it outside the Bible, the style of the story-telling is that of legend or folk-lore rather than history, and there is no archaeological record of this movement of tribes across the Sinai peninsula. On the other hand, the story is full of place names and dates and was regarded even by hostile observers as true. A good example of this is the Egyptian historian Manetho, writing in the fourth century BC. Nor is the lack of archaeological evidence persuasive: much in the history of the ancient Near East is similarly unsupported. Cities and towns obviously preserve more than deserts and seas. Generally there would have been – must have been – more movement of nomadic tribes than we shall ever know about. There is continued debate about when the Exodus happened – if it happened. Was it in the fifteenth century or the thirteenth century BC? We have a date in 1 Kings 6:1: Solomon began to build the house of the LORD, we hear, 'In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month'. That would work out as 1450BC, the fifteenth century date. But there is much to say for a thirteenth century date. We hear that Israelite slaves were forced to build the cities of Pithom and Raamses [Ramesses is the Egyptian spelling] (Ex 1:11) and that points to the reign of the Pharaoh Ramesses II (c1303-1213BC). And it was from Ramesses II's successor, Merneptah, that we hear of the existence of the nation of Israel. An inscribed stone – the Meneptah Stele – mentions Israel and some Canaanite cities as defeated militarily by the Pharaoh. By 'Israel' is indicated an ethnic group rather than a city or a land. Some of the scepticism about the Exodus is undoubtedly to do with the role of plagues and miracles. Plagues are associated with disease and natural disaster – however explained – and miracles are indications of the supernatural, and that is the lens through which believers view events. I think we can happily conclude that the Exodus story, however embroidered and interpreted, is historical, even if much ambiguity and uncertainty remain.

Tuesday in Week 16 [Year 1]

20th July

Reading

Exodus 14:21 – 15:1 (RSV)

The Pursuers are drowned

[¹⁹ Then the angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed^[a] without one coming near the other all night. ²¹ Then] Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians, ²⁵ clogging^[b] their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily; and the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from before Israel; for the LORD fights

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.' ²⁷ So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the LORD routed^[c] the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host^[d] of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained. ²⁹ But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. ³¹ And Israel saw the great work which the LORD did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD; and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

15 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

'I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.'

Reflection

THE RED SEA story is familiar to us, not only from the Blessing of Water at Holy Baptism but also from the Easter Vigil liturgy. It is the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, which mentions 'the Red Sea'. The Hebrew version gives us 'Sea of Reeds' instead, probably one of the marshy freshwater lakes that are still found along the course of what is now the Suez Canal. This story is the last of the great wonders God performs in Egypt, as his people leave, and we are now at the end of this part of the Book of Exodus and at the limits of the Pharaoh's jurisdiction. We cannot explain – let alone explain away – the miracle that took place at the Sea of Reeds and we are content to view it typologically. That is, we see the escape from slavery in Egypt, the deliverance from drowning, and the journeying on to the Land of Milk and Honey as types and shadows of the forgiveness of original sin through the waters of Holy Baptism, and our progress through life to the Promised Land and life with God for ever. We do not need to resort to Mesopotamian creation myths about sea monsters but, in passing, we do notice echoes of Genesis and the movement over the waters of chaos of the Breath of God, his Spirit. We notice the division of the waters on the second day of Creation and the appearance of dry land on the third. We notice too the new chance given by God to Noah and his family and the selected animals and birds as they emerged from the primaeval flood. Here, as they emerge from the waters of the Red Sea or Sea of Reeds, is a new creation for the people of Israel.

Wednesday in Week 16 [Year 1]

21st July

Reading

Exodus 16:1-5, [6-8], 9-15 (RSV)

Bread from Heaven

16 They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. ²And the whole congregation of the people of Israel

murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, ³ and said to them, 'Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.' [⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, 'At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your murmurings against the LORD. For what are we, that you murmur against us?' ⁸ And Moses said, 'When the LORD gives you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your murmurings which you murmur against him—what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against the LORD.']

⁹ And Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your murmurings.'" ¹⁰ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² 'I have heard the murmurings of the people of Israel; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

¹³ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning dew lay round about the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, 'It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.'

Reflection

WITH the crossing of the Red Sea, or Sea of Reeds, we came to the end of the first section of the Book of Exodus. We are about six weeks into the great escape. The people have now left Egypt, their pursuers have been routed, and they are 'in the wilderness', making their way to Mount

Sinai. 'The wilderness', both before and after the experiences on Mount Sinai, is an inhospitable environment, giving rise to disillusion, doubt, and negativity. The giving of the Ten Commandments and directions for celebrating the covenant will be a time of celebration, disclosure, and encouragement – as are high-points in any journey of pilgrimage – but the word 'wilderness' alludes not only to desert conditions but also to the difficulties the Israelites faced. They had to cope with the psychological pressures of uprooting themselves and heading for an uncertain future. They were going from being a settled - albeit enslaved – people to being a liberated – albeit nomadic – people. Then there were the physical hardships of hunger and thirst. In today's passage we hear them rebelling – it would have been better to have died in Egypt rather than starve to death in the desert. They become dependent on divine help and this comes in the form of manna – a bread-like substance – and a flock of quails. Bread and meat is what they need and these are wonders that cannot be explained. Interestingly, the word 'manna' derives from the Hebrew for 'what is it?', underlining that is an entirely new phenomenon and in one sense unique: the gift happened once. In another sense it is not unique in that it is a type of the daily bread of the Eucharist. Those who worry that the hosts we use at Mass are not sufficiently obviously 'bread' – and some Christians do question our choice of bread for the Eucharist – may take comfort that not only are our host unleavened, as is the bread for the Passover, but that it is a striking reminder of the manna in the desert.

St Mary Magdalen

Thursday in Week 16 [*Year 1*]

22nd July

Reading

Exodus 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20 (RSV)

The Israelites reach Mount Sinai

19 On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ²And when they set out from Reph'idim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mountain. [³And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to

the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, ⁶and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.'

⁷So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. ⁸And all the people answered together and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do.' And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. ⁹And the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you for ever.'

Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. ¹⁰And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments, ¹¹and be ready by the third day; for on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹²And you shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, 'Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death; ¹³no hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.' ¹⁴So Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. ¹⁵And he said to the people, 'Be ready by the third day; do not go near a woman.' ¹⁶]

¹⁶On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. ¹⁹And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. ²⁰And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Reflection

THREE months into the journey, the People of Israel reach Mount Sinai. We are in chapter 19, so half-way through the Book of Exodus, and we shall spend the next five chapters learning about the covenant made between God and Israel at Sinai. Two chapters – 19 and 24 – describe covenant rituals and four intervening chapters – 20-23 – give us the laws and ordinances. The 'laws' are what the Hebrew calls 'the words', and we shall be looking at the Ten Commandments tomorrow, and the 'ordinances' are the Covenant code, a complex of secondary laws, governing both behaviour and worship. The reading in the Lectionary omits a rather critical passage, which we have included here in brackets:

Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him out of the mountain saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, ⁶and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.'

The whole of the Exodus journey is a journey towards communion with God. He is bringing his people to himself, possessing them uniquely, not at the expense of the rest of creation – the peoples of the earth – but as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, that is, having special responsibilities towards other peoples which Isaiah will label as being a light to lighten the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6), a phrase which is echoed by Simeon in the *Nunc Dimittis* (Luke 2:32). The solemnity of the covenant event is underlined with the language of theophany: thunders and lightnings, a thick cloud, a very loud trumpet blast, people trembling. The mountain is wrapped in smoke and there are quakes and fire as the LORD descends to meet his people.

St Bridget of Sweden

Friday in Week 16 [Year 1]

23rd July

Reading

Exodus 20:1-17 (RSV)

The Ten Commandments

20 And God spoke all these words, saying,

2 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 'You shall have no other gods before me.

4 'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; **5** you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, **6** but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

8 'Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. **9** Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; **10** but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; **11** for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 'Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

13 'You shall not kill.

14 'You shall not commit adultery.

15 'You shall not steal.

16 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

17 'You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbour's.'

Reflection

THE DECALOGUE – the Ten Commandments – are ten 'words', mostly prohibitions, ordering an early society. In many respects they resemble various similar codes from the Ancient Near East but no others have proved to be so enduring and of perennial value. The Decalogue comes down to us in two different forms – Exodus 20:1-17, which is set for today, and a version in Deuteronomy (5:7-21). There are some differences: the Sabbath rest in Deuteronomy honours the saving activity of God, bringing his people out of slavery in Egypt 'with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm'; the Sabbath rest in Exodus is a reminder that 'in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day' (20:11). Some rabbis ascribe the tradition of having two lights to light at the Sabbath – from which we get the Catholic custom of always having at least two candles on the altar – to this dual interpretation of the Sabbath commandment. A further difference is that the commandments are grouped slightly differently. Jews and Protestant Christians follow Exodus in separating the commandment against other gods from the prohibition of idols, and merge the prohibition of coveting wives and property into one. Catholics and Lutherans (following Augustine) see the worship of other gods and idolatry as one commandment but distinguish the prohibition of lust (coveting wives) from desiring the possessions of others. The Hebrew is clear that – however counted – there are ten commandments and, following the Catholic order, one can say that the first three – holiness of God, holiness of God's Name, holiness of time – concern our relationship with God, and the last seven – the honour of parents, the sanctity of life, the purity of the marriage bond, the right to personal property, the integrity of truthful speech, the inviolability of another's spouse, the respecting of others' property.

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