

**DEANERY OF ST EDMUND CAMPION  
ENGLISH MARTYRS—  
VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE PASTORAL AREA**

[www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

[www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk)

## **East Hendred Catholic Parish**

**Week 12B *Per Annum***

**20<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021**



***The Nativity of St John the Baptist (24<sup>th</sup> June)***

## Reflection *St John the Baptist (24<sup>th</sup> June)*

**THE FIGURE** of St John the Baptist takes on for us an especially urgent relevance. If we can no longer rely on the culture in which we live to teach bible stories and the fundamentals of Christianity to our children and to our neighbours, who is going to do it? The story of the birth of John the Baptist is intertwined with the story of the birth of Jesus, his cousin who was six months older. These two stories are told in Luke 1 though nowadays we tend to hear only the Jesus-bits. By Luke 2 the story is all about Jesus and when John re-appears (Luke 3) it is as an adult, someone who proclaims himself as the Forerunner of the Messiah.

The coming of Christ, celebrated on nearly the longest night of the winter, is the triumph of light over darkness. That same light is heralded as a Dayspring or Dawn on Midsummer's Day, the longest day of the summer, the Birth of St John the Baptist. The only births we celebrate in the Church Calendar are the birth of Our Lady, the birth of St John the Baptist, and the birth of Christ. Each is an event of momentous consequences.

To quote Isaiah and St John the Baptist, who is going to 'prepare the way of the Lord'? Who is going to 'make straight in the desert a highway for our God'? Who is going to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ that 'the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together'? All flesh. Are we talking about nothing less than that or do we keep the Good News to ourselves?

The story of Saint John the Baptist reminds us – though we need no reminding – that the Christian religion knows all about extreme situations. Like the Baptist, people still lose their heads for proclaiming what is true. As we follow the example of John the Baptist, we don't need to go out into the desert or eat locusts and wild honey. But we do need to take the risk of saying 'Prepare the way of the Lord', announcing the good tidings of the Christian Gospel wherever we can. If we don't tell those around us – our husbands and wives, our children and grandchildren, our friends and neighbours, our work-mates and those whom we meet – who will?

*Fr Andrew*

# WEEK 12 YEAR 1

20<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021

All masses live-streamed [www.churchservices.tv/easthendred](http://www.churchservices.tv/easthendred)  
please book for Sunday masses: [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

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

**SUNDAY 12B** *Per Annum* [Green]  
**20<sup>th</sup> June**                      **9.30am**      **Parish Mass**                      *Pro populo*  
   **6pm**              **Holy Mass**  
                        *RIP Howard Kernow (Mary Harrison)*

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**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June**              **St Aloysius Gonzaga**  
   *No 9.15am Mass*  
   11.30am      Funeral Mass *by Invitation*      Angus Clark

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June**              **SS John Fisher & Thomas More, Martyrs**      [Red]  
   9.15am              Holy Mass *FM Thomas More Eyston 2012*

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June**      *St Etheldreda, Abbess*                      [White]  
   9.15am              Holy Mass *RIP Paul Hill (Mary Harrison)*

**NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST**                      [White]  
**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June**              **9.15am**              **Holy Mass**  
   **11am**                      **Baptism** *by Invitation*

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June**                      *Feria*                      [Black]  
   9.15am              Requiem Mass                      *Holy Souls*

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June**              **Our Lady St Mary on Saturday**  
   *No Mass*

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**SUNDAY 13B** *Per Annum*                      [Green]  
**27<sup>th</sup> June**                      **9.30am**              **Parish Mass**                      *Pro populo*  
   **6pm**                      **Holy Mass**

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## CONTACT DETAILS

**Fr Andrew:** 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

[aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

[hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) is monitored by the Parish Administrator and her Assistant.

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# East Hendred Catholic Parish

## NOTICEBOARD

### CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June, there were 188 hits from 57 machines, with 70 remaining on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 44 viewers were from the UK, 6 from Ireland, and 6 from the rest of the world.

### BOOKING FOR MASS AT ST MARY'S

Please book for 9.30am, and 6pm Sunday Masses before 12 noon on Fridays [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) On Saturday contact Fr Andrew on [aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) Space limited. Book early. Masks and social distancing required.

### CHILDREN'S PAGES

**Special stuff for Sunday** 20<sup>th</sup> June, follows on the next couple of pages. Morning Prayer on Livestream is at 9am.

### YOUNG CATHOLICS

The **Fanning the Flame Camp for Young Catholics, age 12 - 18**, will take place Monday 16<sup>th</sup> - Fri 20<sup>th</sup> August. If you are interested, details at [www.fanningtheflame.co.uk](http://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](mailto:sr.veronicabrennan@gmail.com)

# Twelfth Sunday of the Year (B)

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021

## Lord of wind and sea

Mark 4: 35-41

*Jesus and his disciples set off to sail to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had been preaching all day, and soon he lulled to sleep by the rocking of the boat.*

*Suddenly a storm blew up, and great waves began to pound the boat. The disciples were terrified and ran to waken Jesus before they all drowned. Jesus got up, and scolding the sea and wind, he said, "Be at peace".*

*At once the wind dropped and the sea grew calm again. Then Jesus asked his disciples, "Why were you so afraid?*

*Did you not believe in me?"*

*They were filled with wonder because they had seen that even the sea and the wind would obey his commands.*

## Reflection

*Even though the disciples had spent much of their time at sea, this storm was very scary for them. When they were frightened, they turned to Jesus, and he could see how frightened they were. He calmed the sea and wind, so they were no longer frightened. In times of trouble and fear we can turn to Jesus and asked for help. We believe that the power of Jesus can overcome all things, because he is the son of God. Just as Jesus calmed the storm, so he will bring peace and tranquillity into our troubled lives.*

### Closing Prayer

*Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," and so we pray that the Kingdom Of God will grow in our daily lives as we say:*

*Our Father...Amen*

**The Complete Children's Liturgy Book by Katie Thompson ©1995  
Kevin Mayhew Ltd**



# Speak, Lord



Job 3:1-8-11  
Psalm 106  
2 Corinthians 5:14-17  
Mark 4:35-41

SUNDAY LITURGY FOR CHILDREN

Year B — 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time



# JESUS CALMS THE STORM

While Jesus was crossing the lake in a boat  
with his friends, a storm broke out ...

Draw more waves and Jesus  
in the boat calming the storm.



JESUS SAID: "Quiet now! Be calm!"

The wind stopped! The sea was calm again.

EVERYONE WAS

S \_\_\_\_\_ D

# CHARITY

## **Didcot**

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

## **Wantage**

[Jackymattam@btinternet.com](mailto:Jackymattam@btinternet.com) helps with the poor locally. Contact her about what practical help she needs. It is usually children's clothes, push chairs &c.

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## **TEA TALKS**

Oxford Playhouse – our local contact is Jo Noble – is organising Tea Talks, bringing people together in difficult times with a cup of tea and a weekly chat. This began in May and continues through June and is open to everyone over 60. (It's in partnership with Age UK). There will be a further project in the Autumn.

To take part in this free initiative, please contact Beth Sedgwick on 01865 305346 or e-mail [community@oxfordplayhouse.com](mailto:community@oxfordplayhouse.com)

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**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](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

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A donation to the parish may be made on

[www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk)

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# FOR YOUR PRAYERS

## **HOLY FATHER'S JUNE PRAYER INTENTION**

Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.

## **FIRST COMMUNION GROUPS**

Pray for children who have just begun First Communion Preparation through St Amand's School: Felicity, Keeleigh, Elijah, Anna, Eamonn, Luca, Mia, Isobel, Julia, Stephen, Thomas. Pray also for George and Toby from Hendreds Primary School, undertaking preparation with Mary Harrison.

## **THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED**

Special prayers for Sr Catherine at this time, who has been staying in hospital. Also, pray for Baby Martha, 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**

Recent: Angus Clark

Week 20th - 26th June: Anna Hogan, George John Castle.

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## **CARMELITE CONFERENCES**

Scripture and Spirituality Conferences are run from Carmelite Friary on Boar's Hill (which has been local to us and will be again once we get beyond the Zoom-only stage).

Key dates at present are 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> July for a Conference on St John of the Cross and 7pm on 11<sup>th</sup> July for an event called 'Teresa's Four Waters in Word, Image, and Song'.

For further details, contact: [ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk](mailto:ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk)

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# East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Twelfth  
Sunday in Ordinary  
Time (B)  
20<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
Antiphons,  
Prayers and Readings**

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## **Entrance Antiphon**

The Lord is the strength of his people, a saving refuge for the one he has anointed. Save your people, Lord, and bless your heritage, and govern them for ever.

*Dominus fortitudo*

*Cf. Ps 27:8-9*

## **Collect**

Grant, O Lord, that we may always revere and love your holy name, for you never deprive of your guidance those you set firm on the foundation of your love. 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**

The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: ....

*Job 38:1, 8-11(RSV)*

- <sup>8</sup> 'Who shut in the sea with doors,  
when it burst forth from the womb;  
<sup>9</sup> when I made clouds its garment,  
and thick darkness its swaddling band,  
<sup>10</sup> and prescribed bounds for it,  
and set bars and doors,  
<sup>11</sup> and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther,  
and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?

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*The Revised Grail Psalms Copyright © 2010, Conception Abbey/The Grail, administered by GIA Publications, Inc., www.giamusic.com All rights reserved.*

**Psalm 107:23-26, 28-31 R/1**

**R/ O give thanks to the Lord for he is good;  
for his mercy endures for ever.**

Some went down to the sea in ships,  
to trade on the mighty waters.

These have seen the deeds of the Lord,  
the wonders he does in the deep. **R/**

For he spoke and raised up the stormwind,  
tossing high the waves of the sea  
that surged to heaven and dropped to the depths.  
Their souls melted away in their distress. **R/**

Then they cried to the Lord in their need,  
and he rescued them from their distress.  
He stilled the storm to a whisper,  
and the waves of the sea were hushed. **R/**

They rejoiced because of the calm  
and he led them to the haven they desired.  
Let them thank the Lord for his mercy,  
his wonders for the children of men. **R/**

**Second Reading**

*2 Corinthians 5:14-17(RSV)*

Brethren, the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. <sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

**Alleluia**

Alleluia, **alleluia.** The great prophet has appeared among us:  
God has visited his people. **Alleluia.**

**Gospel***Mark 4:35-41(RSV)*

<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go across to the other side.'<sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd, they took him with them, just as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care if we perish?' <sup>39</sup> And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?'

**Prayer over the Offerings**

Receive, O Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation and praise and grant that, cleansed by its action, we may make offering of a heart pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord.

**Preface***De historia salutis*

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, through Christ our Lord. For by his birth he bought renewal to humanity's fallen state, and by his suffering cancelled out our sins; by his rising from the dead he has opened the way to eternal life, and by ascending to you, O Father, he has unlocked the gates of heaven. And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

**SPIRITUAL COMMUNION***after St Alphonsus Liguori (18<sup>th</sup> 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***Oculi omnium*

The eyes of all look to you, O Lord: and you give them their food in due season.

*Ps 145:15***Prayer after Communion**

Renewed and nourished by the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of your Son, we ask of your mercy, O Lord, that what we celebrate with constant devotion may be our sure pledge of redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

SALVE REGINA

SALve Re-gi-na,\* ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ, Vi-ta, dul-cé-do, et spes  
 nostra, salve. Ad te clamámus, éxsu-les, fí-li-i Hevæ. Ad te  
 suspi-rámus, geméntes et flen-tes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo,  
 Advo-cá-ta nostra, illos tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ó-cu-los ad nos con-vér-te.  
 Et Je-sum, be-ne-díctum fructum ventris tu-i, no-bis post hoc exsí-li-um  
 osténde. O cle-mens: O pi-a: O dulcis Virgo Ma-rí-a.

**Scripture Reading (Week 12[i] of Ordinary Time)**

<b>Monday</b>	Genesis 12:1-9	Matthew 7:1-5
<b>Tuesday</b>	Genesis 13:2, 5-18	Matthew 7:6, 12-14
<b>Wednesday</b>	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18	Matthew 7:15-20

**NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST**

	<b>Isaiah 49:1-6</b>	
	<b>Acts 13:22-26</b>	<b>Luke 1:57-66,80</b>
<b>Friday</b>	Genesis 17:1, 9-10, 15-22	Matthew 8:1-4
<b>Saturday</b>	Genesis 18:1-15	Matthew 8:5-17

**NEXT SUNDAY Sunday 13[B]**

<b>Sunday 13B</b>	<b>Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24</b>
	<b>2 Corinthians 8:7,9,13-15 Mark 5:21-43</b>

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# FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021

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## Monday in Week 12 [Year 1]

21<sup>st</sup> June

### Reading

*Genesis 12:1-9 (RSV)*

**12** Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.'

<sup>4</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup> And Abram took Sar'ai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and the persons that they had gotten in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, <sup>6</sup> Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. <sup>7</sup> Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup> Thence he removed to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup> And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

### Reflection

**WE BEGIN** a series of readings from the Book of Genesis. We start at chapter 12, because that is the beginning of the story of Abraham. We notice that, at the outset, he is called 'Abram' and not 'Abraham'. We notice too that Abram and his family and household head for Canaan and receive the promise that Abram's descendants will inherit the land of

Canaan. Thus is set the scene for the eventual arrival of Moses and the Children of Israel in what will be called 'the Promised Land'. The Abraham story will take us from chapter 12 to chapter 25, and is the first of the history of the patriarchs. We progress in due course to the story of Jacob, chapters 25 to 36, and the story of Joseph, chapters 27 to 50. It is by the end of that third patriarchal narrative that God's people find themselves not in Canaan but in Egypt, where the Book of Exodus takes up the story. We should perhaps notice that the Abraham Cycle, the Jacob Cycle, and the Joseph Cycle, which take up three-quarters of Genesis, are preceded by twelve chapters of pre-history, such stories as Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah's Flood, and the Tower of Babel. These primaeval stories are not so much dealing with the history of Israel as with the early life of humankind.

## **Tuesday in Week 12** [*Year 1*]

**22<sup>nd</sup> June**

**Reading**

*Genesis 13:2-18 (RSV)*

*'Let there be no strife between you and me...for we are kinsmen'*

<sup>2</sup> Now Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. <sup>3</sup> And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, <sup>4</sup> to the place where he had made an altar at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, <sup>6</sup> so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, <sup>7</sup> and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. At that time the Canaanites and the Per'izzites dwelt in the land.

<sup>8</sup> Then Abram said to Lot, 'Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen; for we are kinsmen. <sup>9</sup> Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.' <sup>10</sup> And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jordan valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zo'ar; this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomor'rah. <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan valley, and Lot journeyed east; thus they separated from each

other. <sup>12</sup> Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, while Lot dwelt among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. <sup>13</sup> Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, 'Lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; <sup>15</sup> for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants for ever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your descendants also can be counted. <sup>17</sup> Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.' <sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the LORD.

## Reflection

**THE STORY** of Abram and Lot is the story of an uncle and his nephew. Having no son at this stage, Abram would have viewed Lot as his heir. We have instead the story of an estrangement, apparently the result of rivalry between Abram's and Lot's herdsman. Abram views all this peaceably and suggests a parting of the ways, giving Lot the choice of the direction in which to head. Lot's decision is not a good one: he ends up in the valley of Sodom, a place of great wickedness. Meanwhile the Lord gives Abram all the land he can see, looking in all four directions, and promises that his descendants will be like the dust of the earth in sheer numbers. Abraham – still called Abram – moves his tent to Hebron, the oaks of Mamre, where he builds an altar.

## Wednesday in Week 12 [Year 1]

**23<sup>rd</sup> June**

**Reading**

*Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 (RSV)*

*God's Covenant with Abram*

**15** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, 'Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' <sup>2</sup> But Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Elie'zer of Damascus?' <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, 'Behold, you have given me no offspring; and a slave born in my house will be my heir.' <sup>4</sup> And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir.' <sup>5</sup> And he

brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' <sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup> And he said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chalde'ans, to give you this land to possess.' <sup>8</sup> But he said, 'O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' <sup>9</sup> He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.' <sup>10</sup> And he brought him all these, cut them in two, and laid each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. <sup>11</sup> And when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

<sup>12</sup> As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram; and behold, a dread and great darkness fell upon him ... <sup>17</sup> When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. <sup>18</sup> On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphra'tes,

## Reflection

**IN THIS** third extract from the story of Abraham, we have the heart of the matter, God enters into a covenant – a solemn agreement with Abram. Yesterday we heard of Abram's descendants being as numerous as the particles of dust on the earth. Today we hear that his descendants will be as numerous as the innumerable stars in the sky. We hear too that Abram, though an old man, will nonetheless have a son. All of this is sealed and consecrated, as we would expect in an ancient religion, by an animal sacrifice. Three three-year-old animals – a heifer, a she-goat, and a ram – are cut in two and two birds – a turtle-dove and a pigeon – are placed, whole and alongside them. The sacrifice is mysteriously effected not by Abram's agency – it gets dark and he falls asleep – but by a smoking fire pot and flaming torch, appearing, it would seem, out of nowhere. We notice that Abram is still Abram. We shall hear on Friday how his name is changed,



# THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June

## Reading

Luke 1:57-66, 80 (RSV)

*His Name is John*

<sup>57</sup> Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. <sup>58</sup> And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup> And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechari'ah after his father, <sup>60</sup> but his mother said, 'Not so; he shall be called John.' <sup>61</sup> And they said to her, 'None of your kindred is called by this name.' <sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. <sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, 'His name is John.' And they all marvelled. <sup>64</sup> And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. <sup>65</sup> And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; <sup>66</sup> and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, 'What then will this child be?' For the hand of the Lord was with him....<sup>80</sup> And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

## Reflection

**TODAY** is the longest day, the Summer Solstice, the day when the earth's axis is tilted most closely to the sun, the day on which there is most daylight. Not everyone realises that the Church celebrates the times of longest daylight and longest night. The Birth of St John the Baptist – his Nativity – is just after the summer solstice and the Birth of Jesus Christ – Christmas – is just after the winter solstice, when the earth's axis is tilted furthest from the sun.

The Gospel Canticle used in Morning Prayer is the *Benedictus*, in which Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, hails John as the prophet of the Dawn, the Dayspring from on high, the one who looks towards the coming of the Light. And, as the longer Creed reminds us, Jesus – God the Son – is *Lumen de lumine*, Light from Light.

The two men are cousins, John being six months older than Jesus, as the familiar narrative of the Annunciation reminds us – 'In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God...to a virgin [whose] name was Mary.'

Just a few verses earlier, the same archangel had appeared to Zechariah, the priest praying in the temple at the altar of incense. St John the Precursor, or Forerunner, as the Orthodox Church calls him, is given greater significance in the East than in the West and in the words of Jesus we see a conundrum:

**Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.** *Matt*  
*11:11*

The least in the kingdom of heaven - the least in the new dispensation - is greater than John the Baptist because John died before the Crucifixion. But no one is greater than John because of his role as the last of the prophets of the Old Covenant, a New Elijah, preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah, and identifying him: 'Behold, the Lamb of God'. We see a happy coming-together of the three figures, Mary, John the Baptist, and Jesus. They are inextricably linked in the narrative, and we are not surprised to notice that, in the Calendar, only with these three figures - Mary, John the Baptist, and Jesus - do we honour their birthday.

## **Friday in Week 12** [*Year 1*]

**25<sup>th</sup> June**

**Reading**

*Genesis 17:1-22 (RSV)*

*The Sign of the Covenant*

**17** When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.' <sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup>'Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. <sup>7</sup>And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. <sup>8</sup>And I will give to you, and to

your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.'

<sup>9</sup> And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup> This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. <sup>12</sup> He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised; every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house, or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, <sup>13</sup> both he that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money, shall be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup> Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.'

<sup>15</sup> And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sar'ai your wife, you shall not call her name Sar'ai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup> I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her; I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.' <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, 'Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?' <sup>18</sup> And Abraham said to God, 'O that Ish'mael might live in your sight!' <sup>19</sup> God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. <sup>20</sup> As for Ish'mael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup> But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year<sup>22</sup> When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

## Reflection

**THE ABRAHAM** cycle was interrupted yesterday by our celebration of the Nativity of St John the Baptist. Had we been reading the continuous story we should have been in Genesis 16, in which Abram and Sarai his elderly and childless wife seek to respond to the need to have offspring by means of the traditional practice of Hagar, from whom is born Ishmael. It seems, from the text, that this is very much Sarai's idea – it says that

Abram 'listened to the voice of Sarai' (Gen 16:2) and we are reminded slightly of God's rebuke to Adam who 'listened to the voice' of Eve (Gen 3:17). What we have in today's reading is altogether more wonderful than surrogate breeding. We have the natural gift of a son and heir to an elderly couple, past child-breeding age. We are immediately reminded of the gift of John the Baptist to elderly parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, and in both examples we are in the area of covenant. The child of Abraham and Sarah, as they are now known, is marked with circumcision, which, as regards males, becomes the sign of the covenant. This covenant is one of great blessing throughout the generations. But there is more to come because the child of Zechariah and Elizabeth will be a prophet announcing the Dayspring from on High, the New Covenant.

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# June is the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

## Meditation by St Thérèse of Lisieux

I need a heart burning with tenderness,  
Who will be my support for ever,  
Who loves everything in me, even my weakness...  
And who never leaves me day or night.  
I could find no creature  
Who could always love me day or night.  
I could find no creature  
Who could always love me and never die.  
I must have a God who takes on my nature  
And becomes my brother and is able to suffer!  
You heard me, only Friend whom I love.  
To ravish my heart, you became man.  
You shed your blood, what a supreme mystery!  
O heart of Jesus, treasure of tenderness,  
You yourself are my happiness, my only hope.  
You who knew how to charm my tender youth,  
Stay near me till the last night...  
Ah! I know well, all our righteousness  
Is worthless in your sight.  
To give value to my sacrifices,  
I want to cast them into your Divine Heart.  
You did not find your angels without blemish.  
In the midst of lightning you gave your law!  
I hide myself in your Sacred Heart, Jesus.  
I do not fear, my virtue is you!