

**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

26th September – 3rd October 2021



Michaelmas (29th September)

WEEK 26 YEAR 1

26th September – 3rd October 2021

All masses live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendred
book for Sunday morning Mass: hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
St Mary's is usually open each day from 9am until late afternoon.

SUNDAY 26B **HARVEST THANKSGIVING** [Green]
26th September **9.30am Parish Mass** Pro populo
6pm Holy Mass
RIP Ronald Teasdale (Catherine Roberts)

WEEK 26 (Year 1)

Monday 27th September St Vincent de Paul, Founder [white]
9.15am Holy Mass

Tuesday 28th September Of Week 26 [green]
9.15am Holy Mass
Deceased Relatives and Friends (Denis Smith)
[white]

Wednesday 29th September **The Holy Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael**
9.15am Holy Mass FM John Beary 1999

Thursday 30th September St Jerome, Priest, Doctor of the Church [white]
9.15am Holy Mass St Amand's Intentions

Friday 1st October St Teresa of the Child Jesus, Religious,
Doctor of the Church [white]
9.15am Holy Mass FM Frances Eyston 1862

Saturday 2nd October The Holy Guardian Angels [white]
No Mass

SUNDAY 27B [Green]
3rd October **9.30am Solemn Pontifical Mass**
11am Pontifical Mass
12noon Angelus and Meeting at School
4pm Evening Prayer and Adoration
5.15pm Meeting with Youth in Church
6pm Pontifical Mass

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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The Bishop's Visitation

THE TIMETABLE for Sunday 3rd October is as follows:

9.30am	Solemn Pontifical Mass <i>(Music by St Mary's Schola)</i>
11am	Holy Mass <i>(celebrated by the Bishop)</i>
12 noon	<i>Angelus</i> and Meeting at School
4pm	Evening Prayer and Adoration
5.15pm	Meeting with Youth in Church
6pm	Holy Mass <i>(celebrated by the Bishop)</i>

Please book for any of the three masses.

The 12 noon and 5.15pm meetings are for invited groups.

Evening Prayer with Adoration is open to all. Please feel free to arrive or leave at any time during the hour of mostly silent prayer.

Changes of Arrangements

THE STANDING COMMITTEE met on Zoom on Wednesday 22nd September to discuss changes of arrangements. We looked at arrangements for the Bishop's Visitation, the re-opening of St Patrick's and Hendred House, and modifications to protocols at St Mary's.

On the re-opening of St Patrick's, we plan to have public Mass there on Sunday 31st October, the solemnity of All Saints, at 11.15am. Work will be done in the meantime to get the building ready and to decide how best to allocate seating. This Mass will be for those who book a place. We shall then review matters and hope to be able to restore the regular Sunday Mass with effect from Sunday 29th November, Advent Sunday, when the Catholic Mass obligation is due to be re-introduced. We hope to re-introduce the 8.30am Mass on Fridays at Hendred House (from 3rd December). These matters will be reviewed and confirmed at a November meeting of the Standing Committee.

As regards St Mary's, I have received conflicting advice. We agree that people should still be asked to wear masks, as a courtesy to others, and ventilation should continue to be maximised. We are happy that the Sunday 6pm Mass should continue to be available without booking and we also think that people, at any mass, should be encouraged to sit with anyone they feel comfortable to sit with. We are also happy to see some music re-introduced at 9.30am and for the 'fogging regime' to be a bit more light touch. Some would like to see booking and social distancing done away with. Others would be uncomfortable with that. My own view is that, for the time being, we should keep booking and social distancing in place at 9.30am on Sundays – so there is room for any who want to come, including those who may be anxious – but remind people that there are six masses a week – weekdays and Sunday evenings – where no booking is required and where social distancing is left to individuals to judge. Having said that, I hope we are very close to the point where we can dispense with booking and leave individuals to judge distance. This we would do were the churches in our parish a little more spacious.

Thank you all for your patience, help, and support.

Fr Andrew

IN THE Early Church, as they spread the Gospel, the Apostles ordained Bishops to run local churches, one in each city. The people of the city and surrounding area would gather, Sunday by Sunday, to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. As the Church spread, the Bishops in turn needed deputies – priests – so that the Eucharist could be celebrated in more and more places. So it came about that the Church was mainly staffed by priests. The Bishop remains the ‘normal’ celebrant of the Mass even if, for most people most of the time, he is not the ‘usual’ celebrant. The parish priest – now the Bishop’s area of oversight (‘diocese’) is so large – is the one whom most people see and know, and from whom they receive pastoral care and the sacraments. Yet the priest remains strictly the deputy of the Bishop. In that way, the Church coheres, so that it is not a series of congregations, each going their own sweet way, but more like local franchises of the same outfit. That is why many Catholics are content to attend Mass in different parishes: what is on offer, despite the local flavour, is very much the same thing throughout the world.

The Bishop dresses distinctively. He wears a mitre (symbolising the flames of the Holy Spirit descending on the apostles at Pentecost), a ring (to show that he represents Christ the Bridegroom to the Church Christ’s Bride), a pectoral cross (to highlight what lies at the heart of his ministry), and he carries a crozier (a version of a shepherd’s crook since he represents the Good Shepherd). Wherever he goes in his diocese he celebrates ‘pontifically’ – that is, he builds bridges, joining everyone together, and the fullness of his ministry is symbolised by the use of the ‘seventh candle’. Normally we have six candles but, with the Bishop present, we have the full seven of the *Menorah*.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S SEPTEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this.

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 26th September - 2nd October: Canon John Desmond Millett, Fr Anthony Birrer, Jane Curley, Charles Francis Eyston, Ida Stafford Northcote, Bride Gertrude Hudson, Horace Tuson, Anthony Pickup.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

SYCAMORE

We are shortly starting a **SYCAMORE** course for adults interested in finding out more about the Faith or preparing for baptism and/or confirmation. We shall at least begin on Zoom. If you are interested, please contact aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk a.s.a.p. **SYCAMORE** is a brand new course (published 15th September!) It comes with very strong recommendation. We can negotiate dates but I am looking at Tuesday evenings, beginning 5 October. There are ten sessions before Christmas and then ten sessions before Easter.

BISHOP'S VISITATION

The Bishop of Portsmouth, Bishop Philip, is visiting on Sunday 3rd October. This is a formal Visitation, as required in Canon Law. There will be three masses: a sung Mass at 9.30am, a mass to include some children who have received Holy Communion and their parents at 11am, and a mass primarily for youth confirmed at All Saintside, and their parents, at 6pm. Further details to be announced including booking for all the Bishop's masses.

BOOKING FOR MASS

Please book for 9.30am Sunday Mass before 12 noon on Fridays hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk On Saturday contact Fr Andrew on aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk There is no need to book for the 6pm Mass. 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.

FR DESMOND MILLETT RIP

Our condolences to Rose Millett, whose brother, Fr Desmond Millett, died during the night of 18th/19th September. He had just returned home from a family reunion, celebrated the First Mass of Sunday, and then died in his sleep. May he rest in peace.

CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 19th-there were 193 hits from 69 unique viewers, with 114 remaining on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 52 machines were in the UK, 7 in Ireland, and 10 in the rest of the world.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Whilst Children's Liturgy is suspended, we are offering access to a website of the SDC Children's Liturgy Resource. All you need to do is click on this link and select the right date: <http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/>

GIVING

CHARITY: *MISSIO*

Missio (APF red boxes). It is time again to please ask for your boxes to be handed in to your promoters or for you to empty them and give a cheque of the contents. If you would prefer you can phone to donate on 02078219755 or go on line at www.missio.org.uk

The missions have really been struggling at this difficult time, so your donations are greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance. Margaret Maytham tel.07768465518.

CHARITY: AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need is appealing for funds to help the suffering Church in Syria. The situation is desperate, and they are asking for donations. Contact 0345 646 0110 or www.acnuk.org/sy21donate

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

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

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Harvest
Thanksgiving
(Sunday 26B)
26th September 2021
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Terra dedit fructum suum

The earth has yielded its fruits: may God, our God, bless us.

Collect

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the fruits that earth has given to benefit the human family and we pray, that, as the working of your supreme providence has produced them, so you may cause the seed of justice and the fruits of charity to spring up in our hearts. 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 (*Sanctification of Labour*)

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15 (RSV)

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; ⁶ but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil....¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Psalm 65:10-14 (*Harvest*) **R/** 5

**R/ With wondrous deliverance you answer us:
O God of our salvation.**
You visit the earth, give it water;
you fill it with riches.
God's ever-flowing river brims over
to prepare the grain. **R/**

And thus you provide for the earth;
you drench its furrows;
you level it, soften it with showers;
you bless its growth. **R/**

You crown the year with your bounty.
Abundance flows in your pathways;
in the pastures of the desert it flows. **R/**

The hills are girded with joy,
the meadows clothed with flocks.
The valleys are decked with wheat.
They shout for joy; yes they sing! **R/**

Second Reading (*Sanctification of Labour*) 2 Thess 3:6-12, 16 (RSV)

⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ we did not eat any one's bread without paying, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you. ⁹ It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: If any one will not work, let him not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. ¹² Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living.....¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.

Alleluia, **Alleluia.**

May those who sow in tears: reap with shouts of joy. **Alleluia.**

Gospel (*Sanctification of Labour*)

Matthew 6:31-34 (RSV)

Jesus said to the crowds: Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

Prayer over the Offerings

Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings we bring to you with thanksgiving from the fertile earth and, as you give us a rich harvest of the earth's produce, so make our hearts abound with heavenly fruitfulness. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface V

(De creatione)

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 laid the foundations of the world and have arranged the changing of times and seasons; and set humanity over the whole world in all its wonder, to rule in your name over all you have made and for ever praise you in your mighty works. And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration we acclaim: 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.

Wir pflügen und wir streuen

We plough the fields, and scatter the good seed on the land;
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand:
He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.

Chorus *All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord
For all His love.*

He only is the maker of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower, He lights the evening star;
The winds and waves obey Him, by Him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, His children, He gives our daily bread.

Chorus

We thank Thee, then, O Father, for all things bright and good,
The seed time and the harvest, our life, our health, and food;
Accept the gifts we offer, for all Thy love imparts,
But what Thou most desirest, our humble, thankful hearts.

Chorus

Communion Antiphon

De fructu operum tuorum

The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord: you bring forth bread from the earth, and wine to cheer the heart. *Cf Ps 104:13-15*

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that, as we give thanks in this saving mystery for the crops harvested from the earth, we may, through the same mystery working within us, be worthy to receive still greater blessings. 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 26 Year 1)

Monday	Zechariah 8:1-8	Luke 9:46-50
Tuesday	Zechariah 8:20-23	Luke 9:51-56
Wednesday	Nehemiah 2:1-8	Luke 9:57-62
Thursday	Nehemiah 8:1-12	Luke 10:1-12
Friday	Baruch 1:15-end	Luke 10:13-16
Saturday	Baruch 4:5-12, 27-29	Luke 10:17-24
Sunday 27B	Genesis 2:18-24	
	Hebrews 2:9-11	Mark 10:2-16

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For the weekday readings and reflections, see also

www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

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

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
Some look at our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

27th September – 1st October 2021

Monday in Week 26 *Per Annum [Year 1]*

St Vincent de Paul

27th September

Reading

Zechariah 8:1-8 (RSV)

God's Promises to Zion

8 And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, ² Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. ³ Thus says the LORD: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. ⁴ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand for very age. ⁵ And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. ⁶ Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it is marvellous in the sight of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in my sight, says the LORD of hosts? ⁷ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country; ⁸ and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.'

Reflection

ZECHARIAH - which means 'The Lord remembers' – seems to be the work of a member of a priestly family at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. He is concerned to see the Temple rebuilt and the book is full of imagery from Temple worship. The book is in two halves and today's reading is towards the end of the first half. The prophet is speaking of the return of the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Tuesday in Week 26 [Year 1]

28th September

Reading

Zechariah 8:20-23 (RSV)

Many Peoples Drawn to Jerusalem

²⁰ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; ²¹ the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I am going.' ²² Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of the LORD. ²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'

Reflection

WE ARE now at the end of the first half of the Book of Zechariah. The second half – if we went on to read that – is probably by a different author, writing somewhat later, looking to the future of Judah and Jerusalem and the final battle and vindication on the Day of the Lord. In today's reading from the end of the first half of the book – we hear the prophet speaking of the return of the exiles from Babylon and looking forward to when fasting turns to feasting and the time when not only Jews but Gentiles will be drawn to Jerusalem and to its Temple.

The Holy Archangels Michael, Gabriel, & Raphael

Wednesday 29th September

Reading

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 (RSV)

Judgment before the Ancient One

⁹ As I looked,
thrones were placed
and one that was ancient of days took his seat;
his raiment was white as snow,

and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames,
its wheels were burning fire.
10 A stream of fire issued
and came forth from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.....

13 I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
14 And to him was given dominion
and glory and kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.

Reflection

THERE are three archangels named in the Bible – Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael – and they have a ministering function in the world as messengers of God. St Michael, whose name means ‘Who is like God?’, is the captain of the heavenly army of angels who triumphs over Satan rather spectacularly in the Apocalypse. He protects the Church, and gives protection to the sick and dying. Today’s feast of Michaelmas derives from the dedication of a basilica in Rome to the name of St Michael. St Gabriel – the name means ‘Strength of God’ - is familiar to us from the Nativity Stories. He plays an important role in the birth of St John the Baptist and at the Annunciation of the Lord to Our Lady in Nazareth. St Raphael – the name means ‘God heals’ – makes an appearance in the Book of Tobit and is often thought to be the angel at the sheep pool, an incident described in John 5:2-4. Not all manuscripts have this passage in full, so it is worth hearing what is said:

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Beth-za'tha, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whoever stepped in first after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.

Of the three archangels – and there must be many more whose existence we do not know about – St Raphael is the least known. Yet his role – bringing divine healing – is of an importance unsurpassed. Today's feast encompasses angels in general: the mediaeval description of Michaelmas, surviving in the dedication of many mediaeval churches and still used in the Church of England to describe the feast – is 'St Michael and All Angels'. That at least reminds us that there is a whole order of existence out of sight and beyond our comprehension.

Thursday in Week 26 [Year 1]

30th September

Reading

Nehemiah 8:1-12 (RSV)

The Great Covenant Renewal

8 ¹And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. ²And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. ³And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁴And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden pulpit which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithi'ah, Shema, Anai'ah, Uri'ah, Hilki'ah, and Ma-asei'ah on his right hand; and Pedai'ah, Mish'a-el, Malchi'jah, Hashum, Hash-bad'danah, Zechari'ah, and Meshul'lam on his left hand. ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people; and when he opened it all the people stood. ⁶And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God; and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen,' lifting up their hands; and they bowed

their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebi'ah, Jamin, Akkub, Shab'bethai, Hodi'ah, Masei'ah, Keli'ta, Azari'ah, Jo'zabad, Hanan, Pelai'ah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. ⁸ And they read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹ And Nehemi'ah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.' ¹¹ So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, 'Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.' ¹² And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

Reflection

WE SAW a little while ago that Ezra and Nehemiah belong together – not only the historical figures but the books which bear their names. The rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem – from the decree of Cyrus the Persian allowing the Jewish exiles to return from Babylon to Judah (c537 BC) to the completion of the work (c516 BC) is described in the first six chapters of Ezra. There is then a gap of some fifty years before the mission of Ezra the priest-scribe is described (Ezra 7-10), a mission to restore faithful observance of the Mosaic Law. Then follows Nehemiah's description of the rebuilding of the city walls (Neh 1-7), which took place about 444 BC. Two further sections follow. Nehemiah 8-12 describes what is best called 'The Great Covenant Renewal' and then, finally, we have an account of Nehemiah's disillusioned return in chapter 13, when, with permission from King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah goes back to Jerusalem to check how things are going. He finds intermarriage prevalent and disregard for the Jewish Law general. The work of restoration is far from done. Such is the overview but in today's reading – from Nehemiah 8 – we are still at a point of optimistic renewal of the Covenant.

Friday in Week 26 [Year 1]

St Teresa of the Child Jesus

1st October

Reading

Baruch 1:15-end (RSV)

Confession of Sins

¹⁵ 'And you shall say: 'Righteousness belongs to the Lord our God, but confusion of face, as at this day, to us, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ¹⁶ and to our kings and our princes and our priests and our prophets and our fathers, ¹⁷ because we have sinned before the Lord, ¹⁸ and have disobeyed him, and have not heeded the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the statutes of the Lord which he set before us. ¹⁹ From the day when the Lord brought our fathers out of the land of Egypt until today, we have been disobedient to the Lord our God, and we have been negligent, in not heeding his voice. ²⁰ So to this day there have clung to us the calamities and the curse which the Lord declared through Moses his servant at the time when he brought our fathers out of the land of Egypt to give to us a land flowing with milk and honey. ²¹ We did not heed the voice of the Lord our God in all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us, but we each followed the intent of his own wicked heart by serving other gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord our God.

Reflection

THERE are only two readings from Baruch at daily Mass. The first is today, and the second, tomorrow. Today's reading, from chapter 1, is a prayer of repentance. Tomorrow's, from Baruch chapter 4, is an oracle of encouragement. There are also two readings at Sunday Mass: part of chapter 5 on the Second Sunday of Advent in Year C and part of chapter 3 as a reading at the Easter Vigil. These readings are set alongside representative readings from the period after the Babylonian Exile, including both histories and prophetic writings. Baruch itself is a compilation of four different documents. It is unlikely that it is the work of Baruch the scribe of Jeremiah, who went off into Egypt with Jeremiah. More likely it was compiled during and after the Exile, having echoes of Second Isaiah (which is from the Exile period) and Daniel which is post-exilic.