

**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

6th – 12th March 2022

(First Week of Lent)



The Temptations of Christ

CONTACT DETAILS

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6th – 13th March 2022

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

All masses at St Mary's live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendre

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

Sunday 6th March	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT 9.30am Parish Mass <i>James, Elliot, Amelie, and RIP Ling Felce</i> 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's 6pm Holy Mass <i>Pro populo</i> <i>FM Louisa Goddard 1967</i>	[PURPLE]
<i>(Readings: Lent Week 1)</i>		
Monday 7th March	<i>Commem. of SS Perpetua & Felicity</i> 9.15am Holy Mass <i>RIP Breda and Alex Smith (Denis Smith)</i> <i>I The Agony in the Garden</i>	<i>[Purple]</i>
Tuesday 8th March	<i>of First Week of Lent</i> 9.15am Holy Mass <i>FM Edward Woods 1937</i> <i>II The Scourging at the Pillar</i>	<i>[Purple]</i>
Wednesday 9th March	<i>of First Week of Lent</i> 9am Morning Prayer 11am Requiem Mass <i>III The Crowning with Thorns</i> <i>RIP Anastasia Doyle</i>	<i>[Purple]</i>
Thursday 10th March	<i>of First Week of Lent</i> 9.15am Holy Mass (<i>attended by school</i>) <i>FM Pupils of St Amand's School</i> <i>IV The Carrying of the Cross</i>	<i>[Purple]</i>
Friday 11th March	<i>Day of Abstinence & CAFOD Family Fast Day</i> 8.30am Holy Mass at Hendred House <i>The Needy and Hungry of the World</i> <i>V The Crucifixion</i> 5pm Evensong at St Augustine's Church	<i>[Purple]</i>
Saturday 12th March	<i>of First Week of Lent</i> No Mass	<i>[Purple]</i>
Sunday 13th March	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT <i>CAFOD Collection</i> 9.30am Parish Mass 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's 6pm Holy Mass	[PURPLE] <i>Pro populo</i>

Confessions during Lent:
8.45am Sundays; after Mass, Monday to Friday;
or by arrangement

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION

For a Christian response to bioethical challenges: We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTION

Monday 7 th	Diocesan Chancellery
Tuesday 8 th	All Working in the Hospice Movement
Wednesday 9 th	All Religious Novices
Thursday 10 th	Community of St Edward the Confessor, Chandler's Ford
Friday 11 th	Providers of Children's Liturgy
Saturday 12 th	Pastoral Care of the Widowed, Separated, and Divorced

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Baby Martha, Sid Wallace, Diana France, John Castle, Petal Connell, Daniel Cuevas, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Karen Greig, Mary McNichol, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Recently departed: Ling Felce, Dame Catherine Wybourne, Anastasia Doyle, Deidre Griffiths

Week 6th - 12th March: Ellen Cuddihy, Alice Couling, Alice Pilcher, Thomas Mulford, Breda Smith, Jo Barr, Margaret Brown, John Curley, Julia Swanson, Mary Teresa Eyston, John Colfer, Brendan O'Neill, William George Mooney, Mary Dainty.

PRAY FOR PEACE



St Sophia's Cathedral

Kyiv

UKRAINE

As the dreadful events unfold in Ukraine, we stand in solidarity with our Caritas colleagues, (who work as the Diocese's outreach organisation) in Caritas-Spes as they continue to assist those vulnerable and in need in Ukraine.

Two Ways of Helping

(1) Caritas-Spes

Caritas-Spes had been working in Eastern Ukraine with the displaced families from the ongoing conflict in the disputed territories, including in Avdiivka which has been under heavy shelling.

If you would like to support Caritas work in the emergency in Ukraine, please donate by visiting their website <https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/europe/ukraine-spes/>

(2) Second Collection

You will likewise be aware that a week **on Sunday, 13 March (Second Sunday of Lent)** (and following the CAFOD Family Fast Day on Friday 11 March), there is the option to receive a second collection after Mass in aid of the CAFOD Lent Appeal, for which physical fundraising materials have previously been made available.

In light of the situation in Ukraine, CAFOD has – in partnership with its sister Caritas agencies in Ukraine, Poland and Moldova – committed £100,000 on behalf of the Catholic community in England and Wales.

Those in our parishes who would like to contribute to this appeal can use the CAFOD Lent Appeal envelopes already distributed: if they intend their donations specifically to benefit those in need in Ukraine, **please encourage mark your donations envelopes 'For Ukraine'**.

Reflection *The Temptations according to St Luke*

IN St Luke's Gospel, certain things happen three times. Jesus is tempted three times by the devil (4:1-13), he is denied three times by Peter (22:54-62) and taunted three times on the Cross (23:35, 37, 39) first by the leaders, then by the soldiers, and then by one of those crucified alongside him. The temptations are the testing of a prophet and we notice that St Luke has Jesus led by the Spirit into the desert, rather different from St Mark's 'driven out into the desert' (Mk 1:12). Like St Matthew, St Luke's tester is 'the devil', whereas St Mark tells us that the tempter was Satan. St Matthew describes Jesus as 'fasting' (Mt 4:2) but St Luke, writing for a gentile readership simply says that Jesus went without food. For St Luke's gentiles the Temptations would conjure up the three vices of love of pleasure, love of possessions, and love of glory.

St Luke places the Temptations between the Genealogy – how Jesus is descended– and the announcement of his prophetic ministry at Nazareth. Saying that he is anointed by the Spirit gets him ejected from the synagogue and very nearly stoned. So the Temptations - Spirit-led - are clearly a preparation and when, in verse 5, we hear that Jesus is in an instant shown all the kingdoms of the empire, it is clear that these are visions. St Luke gives them in a different order from St Matthew, placing the Jerusalem temptation (to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple) as the last of the three. Here we clearly have the struggle between two kingdoms, the authority of God and the kingdom over which the devil has authority. Jesus, invited to worship the devil, is promised the earth but, to borrow a phrase (Jn 18:36), Jesus' kingdom is not of this world. In St Luke's view, this third temptation is the ultimate one.

The temptations are thoroughly grounded in the Old Testament. Forty days recalls the experience of Moses, who fasted forty days before recording the Covenant (Ex 34:28), not to mention Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) who spent forty days wandering in the desert. We recall that the People Israel wandered forty years through the desert on their journey towards the Promised Land (Deut 8:2). All of these were testing experiences and all give context to the challenge to Jesus to disobey the Law. Jesus' reply to the devil's invitation to worship him is from Deut 6:13: 'You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him, and swear by his name'.

Fr Andrew

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

The funeral of Sister Catherine Wybourne will be on Wednesday 16th March at 2.30pm at Belmont Abbey, Hereford. The funeral Mass will be live-streamed. There is a link to the live-streaming on the left hand side of the Belmont Abbey home page. Sister Catherine was very specific about her wishes. She wanted a small monastic funeral with her Benedictine community only. No flowers please. The live-streaming will be a way for all her friends and followers to join in this way.

LENT

During Lent, there will be Morning Prayer at 9am on Wednesdays, before Mass, to which members of St Augustine's congregation are invited. On Fridays we are invited to St Augustine's at 5pm for Evensong. Please try to support these extra activities.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 27th February 2022, 197 people viewed, 51 machines looking only at St Mary's. 29 of these were in the UK and 21 elsewhere. 118 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

SYCAMORE

The **SYCAMORE** course for adults interested in finding out more about the Faith or preparing for baptism and/or confirmation is now well underway and meets on Zoom this Tuesday, 9nd March

E-MAILS, WEBSITE, AND FACEBOOK

Last minute changes are sometimes unavoidable and these are communicated by e-mail to the Bulletin list. Anyone may join the Bulletin list - contact office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

See also our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK

Fully escorted Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, Ireland, celebrating the feast of St Patrick, 14th March 2022. £699.00 per person sharing. Price includes flight with 10kg hand luggage, all transfers, four nights in Knock House Hotel with full board. All entertainment and excursions included. Lunches on days out. Wheelchair accessible rooms. Single room supplement £100. Contact Patricia on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or knockpilgrimages@gmail.com. Knock Pilgrimages is a member of the Travel Trust Association and is fully protected by ATOL T7613.

GIVING



CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY – LENT APPEAL

Every child should grow big and strong. Family Fast Day is Friday 11th March, a day when we eat simply and give generously to support mums around the world, like Amie in Sierra Leone, with expert training in growing and making healthy food. Your small act of love will make a big difference to many communities affected by extreme hunger and children suffering from malnutrition. You can donate in church using a CAFOD envelope or by visiting [Family Fast Day - Lent 2022 | CAFOD](#)

See also the note on Ukraine above.

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

CHARITY: HENDRED

The Hendred Environment Group, led by Cllr Sally Povolotsky, has launched a Community Larder in the village. It both makes available excess supermarket food that would otherwise go to waste (good for the environment) and makes this food available at well below market price, without the stigma or red tape of a food bank as it's open to all for a small subscription. There are posters explaining, including one in the Church porch at St Mary's.

TO GIVE TO OUR 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

East Hendred Catholic Parish



First Sunday in Lent (C) Antiphons, Prayers and Readings

Entrance Antiphon

When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

Invocabit me

Cf Ps 91:15-16

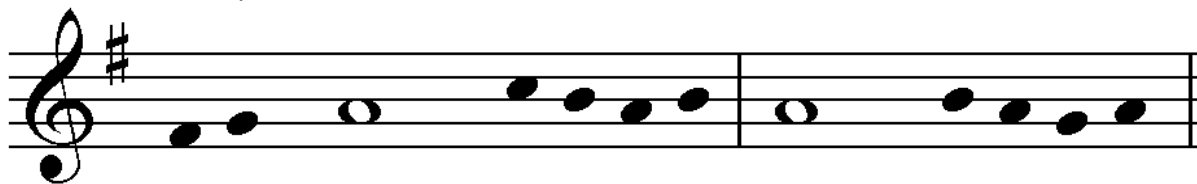
Collect

Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observance of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects. 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

Moses said to the people: The priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. And you shall make response before the Lord your God, 'A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to the Lord the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O Lord, have given me.' And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God.

Deut 26:4-10(RSV)



R/ () Be with me O Lord | () in my dis-tress.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High and abides in the shade of the Al-migh-ty says to the Lord: 'My re-fuge, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust!' R/

Upon you no e-vil shall fall,
no plague ap-proach your tent.
For you has he comman-ded his an-gels
to keep you in all your ways. R/

They shall bear you u-pon their hands,
lest you strike your foot a-gainst a stone.
On the lion and the vi-per you will tread,
and trample the young lion and the ser-pent. R/

Since he clings to me in love, I will free him,
protect him, for he knows my name.
When he calls on me, I will ans-wer him; ~
I will be with him in dis-tress;
I will deliver him, and give him glo-ry. R/

Second Reading

Romans 10:8-13 (RSV)

Scripture says: The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame'. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For, 'every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved'.

Gospel Acclamation



Praise to you, O Christ, King of e-ter-nal glo-ry.

R/ **Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

Man does not live on bread alone:

but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

R/ **Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

Gospel

Luke.4:1-13 (RSV)

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, 'To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours'. And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.' And he took him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Apostles' Creed (*see Mass booklet, page 6*)

Prayer over the Offerings

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray, to make these offerings, for with them we celebrate the beginning of this venerable and sacred time. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(De tentatione Domini)

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. By abstaining forty long days from earthly food, he consecrated through his fast the pattern of our Lenten observance and, by overturning all the snares of the ancient serpent, taught us to cast out the leaven of malice, so that, celebrating worthily the Paschal Mystery, we might pass over at last to the eternal Paschal feast. 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

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

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 though 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

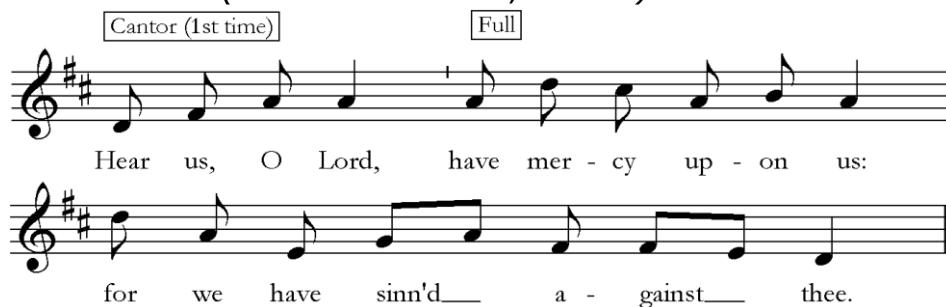
Scapulis suis

The Lord will conceal you with his pinions, and under his wings you will trust.

Cf Ps 91:4

Lent Prose (see Mass booklet, no. 74)

Cantor (1st time) Full



Hear us, O Lord, have mer - cy up - on us:
for we have sinn'd a - gainst thee.

Prayer after Communion

Renewed now with heavenly bread, by which faith is nourished, hope increased, and charity strengthened, we pray, O Lord, that we may learn to hunger for Christ, the true and living Bread, and strive to live by every word which proceeds from your mouth. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading

Monday Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18

Tuesday Isaiah 55:10-11

Wednesday Jonah 3:1-10

Thursday Esther 4:17

Friday Ezekiel 18:21-28

Saturday Deuteronomy 26:16-19

(Lent Week 1)

Matthew 25:31-46

Matthew 6:7-15

Luke 11:29-32

Matthew 7:7-12

Matthew 5:20-26

Matthew 5:43-48

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT (C)

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

Philippians 3:17 – 4:1

Luke 9:28-36

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

7th -12th March 2022

First Week of Lent

Monday in the First Week of Lent

7th March

Reading

Matthew 25:31-46 (RSV)

The Judgment of the Nations

³¹ 'When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not

to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' ⁴⁶ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

Reflection

WE HAVE here a judgment scene: the King is judging the nations, that is, the Gentile world. The passage comes after three parables about preparing for the coming of the Son of Man, but this judgment scene, though it is phrased rather like a parable, is different. As commonly understood, it is thought to be about what happens to everyone when they come before the Judgment Seat of God, the importance of good works for the poor and needy. In this interpretation, the poor and needy are everyone poor and in need. The story then becomes an endorsement of the Golden Rule: 'And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them' (Luke 6:31) Useful though this interpretation is for trying to live well, it is almost certainly not what is meant in Matt 25.

Jesus is speaking to a Jewish audience but he is speaking about what judgment awaits the Gentiles. They will be judged by how they have treated the *adelphoi*, the disciples of Jesus. This is on the basis of Matt 10:40 where Jesus tells his disciples 'He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me.' It is a strange idea that Jews and Gentiles will be judged differently and on different occasions but this seems to be implied not only by St Matthew but also in the Old Testament (Ezek 39:21, Joel 3) and commonly in the apocalyptic tradition (1 Enoch 91:14, Psalms of Solomon 17:29, 4 Ezra 13:33-49 &c). This second interpretation – most probably the correct one – does not prevent us from drawing conclusions about how not only non-Jews and non-Christians behave but how Christians should behave. Hence we have what are commonly referred to as the 'Seven Corporal Works of Mercy', acts based on the injunctions in this bible passage.

Tuesday in the First Week of Lent

8th March

Reading

Matthew 6:7-15 (RSV)

You should pray like this

Jesus said to his disciples: ⁷ 'And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this:

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
¹⁰ Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread;
¹² And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

¹⁴ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Reflection

ON ASH Wednesday we listened to the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus teaching his disciples the duties of Almsgiving, Praying, and Fasting. We were reading Matthew 6 but omitted – and set aside for further consideration – the Lord's Prayer, verses 7-15 of the chapter. That further consideration happens now, when the verses form today's Gospel. Given as a model for all prayer, the Our Father has been treated line by line by quite a few theologians, most famously by St Cyril of Jerusalem, St Augustine of Hippo, and St Cyril of Alexandria. Though there is not time or space here for a line-by-line reflection, Let's look briefly at the basis structure. I am always fascinated by the fact that the Lord's Prayer is for Christians what the *Shema* is for Jews. The *Shema* draws on three texts (Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13–21 and Numbers 15:37–41) and is

prescribed for recitation evening and morning. From early times, Christians similarly have recited the Lord's Prayer at Morning and Evening Prayer and at the daily Mass. When Jesus quotes the *Shema*, Mark 12:28-34, he puts alongside the duty to love God the duty to love one's neighbour. Thus he brings alongside the *Shema* commandment the no less ancient commandment of love of one's neighbour, found in Leviticus 19:18. The importance of this – putting love of God and love of neighbour together, though preserving the primacy of the first – is that it is also the organising principle of the Lord's Prayer. In St Matthew's account, Jesus bids his disciples to pray to God as a Father, praying for the coming of the Kingdom, the fulfilment on earth of the divine will. It is in the light of this that petitioners ask for their 'daily bread' – all that they need – and for forgiveness, a forgiveness which is contingent upon learning to forgive others. The culmination of the prayer is a prayer for delivery from the terrible trials which can face Christians and will face the Church before the end of time. We pray to be delivered from evil itself.

Wednesday in the First Week of Lent

9th March

Reading

Jonah 3:1-10 (RSV)

The people of Nineveh repent

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ²'Arise, go to Nin'evah, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.'³ So Jonah arose and went to Nin'evah, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nin'evah was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he cried, 'Yet forty days, and Nin'evah shall be overthrown!' ⁵And the people of Nin'evah believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

⁶Then tidings reached the king of Nin'evah, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷And he made proclamation and published through Nin'evah, 'By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water, ⁸but let man

and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God; yea, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands. ⁹ Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?’

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it.

Reflection

THE BOOK of Jonah relates to the activities of a prophet in the eighth century BC, from the time of King Jeroboam II of Israel. Some scholars, old and new, are convinced that here is a historical account, notwithstanding such fanciful features as being swallowed by a great fish – and surviving to tell the tale. There is also the quick-growing vine to protect Jonah from the scorching sun, and its equally quick withering. Finally, the fulsome repentance of the people of the city of Nineveh seems like a tall story. After all it was not long after Jonah’s time that the Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria. Whether the book of Jonah is based on history or is a morality tale matters little. What is important for us is that it the background to references made by Jesus. In Matthew 12:38-40 Jesus mentions ‘the sign of Jonah’ and in today’s Gospel, Luke 11:29-32, Jesus refers to Jonah as a sign to the Ninevites. In a similar fashion, the Son of Man is a sign to the generation to whom he was speaking. The particular relevance of the sign of Jonah was that, just as Jonah spent three days in the belly of the great fish, so Jesus was to spend three days in the tomb. We should notice, in both cases, that, though there was much activity during the three days – Jonah praying and praising, Jesus harrowing hell and setting free those locked in death – in both cases, Jonah and Jesus, there was actual death and, in figure and then in reality, resurrection and new life. Such was the new life experienced by Jonah that he was able to preach repentance fruitfully to a great pagan city.

Thursday in the First Week of Lent

10th March

Reading

Matthew 7:7-12 (RSV)

Ask, Seek, Knock

Jesus said to his disciples, ⁷ Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! ¹² So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

Reflection

AN EXTRACT from the Catechism of the Catholic Church will help us make sense of Jesus' teaching about the Prayer of Petition, Ask, Seek, and Knock.

2629 The vocabulary of supplication in the New Testament is rich in shades of meaning: ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out, even 'struggle in prayer.' Its most usual form, because the most spontaneous, is petition: by prayer of petition we express awareness of our relationship with God. We are creatures who are not our own beginning, not the masters of adversity, not our own last end. We are sinners who as Christians know that we have turned away from our Father. Our petition is already a turning back to him.

2630 The New Testament contains scarcely any prayers of lamentation, so frequent in the Old Testament. In the risen Christ the Church's petition is buoyed by hope, even if we still wait in a state of expectation and must be converted anew every day. Christian petition, what St. Paul calls 'groaning,' arises from another depth, that of creation 'in labour pains' and that of our selves 'as we wait for the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.' In the end, however, 'with sighs too deep for words' the Holy Spirit 'helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as

we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.'

2631 The first movement of the prayer of petition is asking forgiveness, like the tax collector in the parable: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' It is a prerequisite for righteous and pure prayer. A trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and with one another, so that 'we receive from him whatever we ask.' Asking forgiveness is the prerequisite for both the Eucharistic liturgy and personal prayer.

2632 Christian petition is centred on the desire and search for the Kingdom to come, in keeping with the teaching of Christ. There is a hierarchy in these petitions: we pray first for the Kingdom, then for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming. This collaboration with the mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which is now that of the Church, is the object of the prayer of the apostolic community. It is the prayer of Paul, the apostle par excellence, which reveals to us how the divine solicitude for all the churches ought to inspire Christian prayer. By prayer every baptized person works for the coming of the Kingdom.

2633 When we share in God's saving love, we understand that every need can become the object of petition. Christ, who assumed all things in order to redeem all things, is glorified by what we ask the Father in his name. It is with this confidence that St. James and St. Paul exhort us to pray at all times.

Friday in the First Week of Lent

11th March

Reading

Matthew 5:20-26 (RSV)

Go and be reconciled to your brother

Jesus said to his disciples: ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹ You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.; ²² But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire. ²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; ²⁶ truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.

Reflection

IN THE Sermon on the Mount, chapter five of St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus presents his listeners with a set of six antitheses. There's this and there's that. Today we heard the first of these antitheses:

²¹ You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment.

As a teacher – a new Rabbi – Jesus is well-within the Rabbinic tradition of explaining and extrapolating from the Jewish Law. Oh, and that word 'Law'. What is referred to is not a rigid set of offences and punishments – like our 'criminal law' – but the *Torah*, effectively an instruction manual. How to live within the Love of God. Following the antithesis as stated, Jesus continues with practical suggestions on reconciliation. First, if you are about to make a gift offering and are estranged from another, put the gift aside and go and be reconciled. Second, if you find yourself in a legal challenge, make friends on the way to court. Reconciliation before making an offering is highlighted by the exchange of the Sign of Peace at Mass. The suggestion is that if one cannot exchange the Peace – not just with those around you but with anyone in the community – then one should not proceed to Holy Communion but instead effect the necessary reconciliation. In the Ambrosian Rite and in the modern Church of England Communion Order, the Peace takes place before the Offertory. More than that, the Anglicans often use the text about leaving the gift in front of the altar as a sentence at the Peace.