

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

Third Week of Easter

1st – 8th May 2022



Breakfast with The Risen Christ

Reflection – Easter Day Homily

We are an Easter people, Alleluia is our song. St Augustine of Hippo

We are posting this week the homily Fr Andrew gave on Easter morning and next week the very fine homily Fr Paul King preached on Maundy Thursday in which he gave an overview of the Paschal Mystery.

ONE EASTER I had a student on placement. He was not at all used to the kind of Holy Week that Catholics and many Anglicans celebrate. I asked him to come to the Easter Triduum and he agreed, provided he could re-join the large student congregation in Nottingham for the upbeat worship of Easter Day, with praise band and alleluias. Afterwards, when we did the review, he confessed that not only had he appreciated the Triduum - Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil - in a new way, but that the depth and meaning of these services had given new depth and meaning to his Easter celebration. I have been thinking about that, partly because those baptised and confirmed last night have experienced the Triduum for the first time. Partly because I was constrained to stay at home, to take part remotely, and to have a very different experience from any I have had since as far back as I can remember, with the exception of 2020 when everything was on Facebook.

On Good Friday morning I listened to the Catholic Herald podcast – sent to me to pass the time. It concerned the Shroud of Turin, for which there are competing claims to authenticity. There's always a story or two of this kind at this time of year. This year we had the Revd Professor Patrick Pullicino - a consultant neurologist, and nowadays a Catholic priest in Southwark diocese – explaining how Jesus' right shoulder was dislocated, no doubt from carrying the cross, causing the damage which we know from St John's Gospel resulted in blood and water coming from his pierced side. Jesus' right arm – the powerful right hand of the one who created the universe and who healed the sick – lay limp and useless by his side.

We have had our fill of stories of suffering and death: particularly as we hear about the shocking atrocities of the war in Ukraine. But we need to have in mind the mysteries of the passion and death of Christ if we are to take part joyfully in the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. We humans experience the gamut of emotions and, particularly in

view of the trials we have faced and will face, we need to seize on the opportunity to celebrate and rejoice.

It is extraordinary how widespread belief in 'life after death' is. Things were less certain at the time of Jesus. In those days, the sadducees – a major Jewish movement – didn't believe in 'life after death' and the followers of Jesus, when he was killed in his prime, must have wondered whether that was the end of everything. We see some of their hesitation in Peter and John in today's Gospel. They run to the tomb doubting and afraid. It is John, we're told, who 'saw and believed'. And yet, not long afterwards, we hear Peter in today's first reading speaking to the Gentile Cornelius and his household and resolutely preaching the essential message of the Gospel and proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ.

There are nervous jokes about doggy heaven and even the after-life of inanimate objects. But most people – surveys still show – are convinced that death is not the end, or, if they are not exactly convinced, they have a working certainty that death is not the end. In some ways this is extraordinary because 'life after death' is almost always seen in terms of heaven – it would seem a universal destination – and yet the Bible lays down rather stringent conditions for living for ever with God. There is much in the Bible about good and honourable behaviour, considerate and loving, but also much about placing our belief and trust in Jesus Christ for our salvation. Maybe you don't have to go to church to be a Christian but, without the nourishment of the Bible and the sacraments, without the companionship of other believers, it seems to me to be rather a tough thing to manage.

So, as we concentrate today on the victory of the Risen Christ, on our joy in inheriting and one day sharing fully in this victory, let us exult and be happy. There is plenty of pain and grief around but today – if just for a few moments – let us focus on the enormous, and freely-given gift of salvation, eternal life with the Risen Christ in the communion of the Blessed Trinity, aided by the prayers of Mary the Mother of God and all the saints.

Fr Andrew

Third Week of Easter

1st – 8th May 2022

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

Church open from 9am each day

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

[WHITE]

1st May **9.30am** **Parish Mass** *Pro populo*
 11.15am **Mass (St Patrick's)**
 6pm **Holy Mass** *RIP Phil Smith*

Monday **St Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church** [White]
2nd May **9.15am** **Holy Mass** *RIP Peter Frearson*

Tuesday **SS Philip & James, Apostles** [Red]
3rd May **9.15am** **Holy Mass** *RIP Alex Smith, Breda Smith*

Wednesday **The English Martyrs** [Red]
4th May **9.15am** **Holy Mass** *English Martyrs, Didcot*

Thursday *Of the Third Week of Easter*
5th May *No Mass (St Mary's closed for electrical work)*

Friday *Of the Third Week of Easter* [White]
6th May **8.30am** **Holy Mass (Hundred House)**

Saturday *Of the Third Week of Easter* [White]
7th May *No Mass*

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

[White]

8th May **9.30am** **Parish Mass** *Pro populo*
 11.15am **Mass (St Patrick's)**
 6pm **Holy Mass** *Claire*

CONTACT DETAILS

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aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

The Rosary

The Rosary has five sets of ten beads each preceded by a separate bead. The Our Father is said on the separate bead, a Hail Mary on each of the ten beads, and a Glory be... whilst holding the chain before proceeding to the next separate bead. It is customary to begin, on the short chain, with the Creed (holding the crucifix), an Our Father, three Hail Marys and a Glory be... At the end of the chaplet (set of five mysteries), hold the medal and say the Hail Holy Queen....

The Five Joyful Mysteries (Monday and Saturday)

- 1 **The Annunciation** *Luke 1:26-38*
- 2 **The Visitation** *Luke 1:39-46*
- 3 **The Nativity** *Luke 2:1-7*
- 4 **The Presentation** *Luke 2:22-32*
- 5 **The Finding in the Temple** *Luke 2:42-52*

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesday and Friday)

- 1 **The Agony in the Garden** *Mark 14:32-38*
- 2 **The Scourging at the Pillar** *John 18:33 – 19:1*
- 3 **The Crowning with Thorns** *Mark 15:16-20*
- 4 **The Carrying of the Cross** *Matthew 27:31-34*
- 5 **The Crucifixion** *Luke 23:33-48*

The Five Luminous Mysteries (Thursday)

- 1 **The Baptism in the Jordan** *Matthew 3:13-17*
- 2 **The Wedding at Cana** *John 2:1-12*
- 3 **The Proclamation of the Kingdom**
Luke 4:14-21
- 4 **The Transfiguration** *Mark 9:2-8*
- 5 **The Institution of the Eucharist** *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

The Five Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday and Sunday)

- 1 **The Resurrection** *Luke 24:1-6*
- 2 **The Ascension** *Luke 24:50-53*
- 3 **The Gift of the Holy Spirit** *Acts 2:1-4*
- 4 **The Assumption of Our Lady** *1 Corinthians 15:20-26*
- 5 **The Coronation of Our Lady and the Glory of the Saints**
Revelation 12:1-6

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 lift 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.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S MAY PRAYER INTENTION

We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary's life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTION

Sunday 1 st	God's blessing on human work
Monday 2 nd	Parish Disability Representatives
Tuesday 3 rd	All who decorate our Churches
Wednesday 4 th	Parish of English Martyrs, Reading
Thursday 5 th	Community of St Joseph, Copnor
Friday 6 th	Parish of St Laurence, Petersfield
Saturday 7 th	Parish of St Joseph, Tilehurst

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

Week 1st- 7th May: Pauline Ann O'Rourke, Phil Smith, Lilian Smith, Peter Frearson, James Caven, John Lineham, Kathleen Eunice Wells, Nicholas Hardisty, Edith Elsley, Alex Smith, Sybil Hudson, Margaret Mulford, Rosino Vettrano.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

SHORTAGE

We need a couple more stewards for the 6pm Mass Rota. It would be good also to find a sacristan to help set up and clear up at 6pm. Please speak to Fr Andrew if you would like to help. No pay: heavenly benefits.

COLLECTIONS

On Sunday 8th May there is a Second Collection for the Clergy Training Fund. Please use the yellow envelopes provided if you can: gift aid then can be collected.

Fr Andrew thanks you warmly for the generosity of the Easter collection for the support of the parish priest.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 24th April 2022, 173 people viewed, 59 machines looking only at St Mary's. 40 of these were in the UK, 10 in the USA, 5 from Ireland, and 4 from other countries. 101 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

PARISH SECRETARY

Contact Ma Lluïsa Jarne on office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk If you need to speak to her in person, she is available at one of the St Mary's Sunday masses and also on Mondays, 6pm-8pm, on 07983045824.

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2022

18th – 22nd July, flying from Bournemouth Airport.

lourdes@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

[Easter Activities](#) - Try some of these activities and worksheets. Remember: Easter is a season not just a day!

[The Meaning of Easter Video](#) - The English names for our liturgical holidays ('holy days') are so interesting. Here's a little history behind the word 'Easter'.

East Hendred Catholic Parish



Third Sunday of Easter (C) Antiphons, Prayers and Readings

Entrance Antiphon

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth; O sing to the glory of his name, O render him glorious praise, alleluia.

Iubilate Deo, omnis terra

cf Ps 66:1-2

Collect

May your people exult for ever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection. 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.

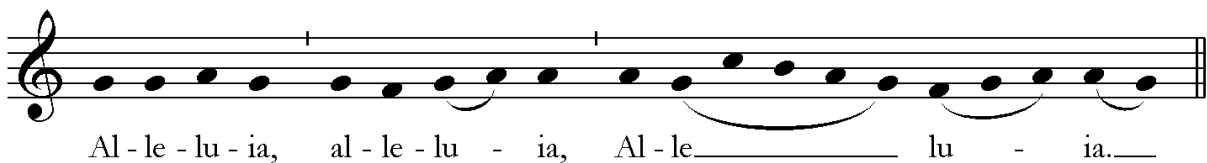
First Reading

The high priest questioned the apostles, saying, 'We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.' But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.' So they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name.

Acts 5:12-16 (RSV)

Alleluiaic Psalm

Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-13 (Revised Grail)



I will extol you, Lord, you have raised *me* up,
and have not let my enemies rejoice o- ver me. **R/**

O Lord, you have lifted up my soul from *the* grave,
restored me to life from those who sink in-to the pit. **R/**

Sing psalms to the Lord, you faithful ones; give thanks to his ho -ly name.
His anger lasts a moment; his favour all through life. ~
At night come tears, but *dawn* brings joy. **R/**

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me; be my helper, O Lord.
You have changed my mourning into dancing, ~
removed my sackcloth and girded *me* with joy. **R/**

So my soul sings psalms to you, and will not be *si* - lent.
O Lord my God, I will thank you *for* e - ver. **R/**

Musical notation for the first line of the hymn. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef. The melody is written in a simple, stepwise fashion. The lyrics 'Al-le lu - ia.' are written below the staff, with the first note of 'Al-le' aligned with the first note of the staff. A 'R/' is placed to the left of the staff.

Second Reading

Apocalypse 5:11-14 (RSV)

Then I John looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!' And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, 'To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!' And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' and the elders fell down and worshipped.

Gospel Acclamation

Musical notation for the Gospel Acclamation. It consists of two staves with a treble clef. The melody is written in a simple, stepwise fashion. The lyrics 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.' are written below the staves, with the first note of 'Al - le' aligned with the first note of the first staff.

*Christ has risen: he who created all things,
And has granted his mer-cy to men..*

Gospel*John 21:1-19 (RSV)*

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tibe'ri-as; and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathan'a-el of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zeb'edee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any fish?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.' (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive, O Lord, we pray, these offerings of your exultant Church, and, as you have given her cause for such great gladness, grant also that the gifts we bring may bear fruit in perpetual happiness. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface*(De Christo vivente et semper interpellante pro nobis)*

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. He never ceases to offer himself for us but defends us and ever pleads our cause before you: he is the sacrificial Victim who dies no more, the Lamb, once slain, who lives for ever. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

Ant.
6.
R

E-gí-na cáeli * læ-tá-re, alle-lú-ia: Qui- a
 quem me-ru- ísti portá-re, alle-lú-ia: Re-surréx-it,
 si-cut dix-it, alle- lú-ia: Ora pro no-bis De-um,
 alle-lú- ia.

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluia.
 he whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia.
 as he promised hath arisen, alleluia.
 pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluia.

V/ Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia:
R/ for the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

2nd – 6th May 2022

Monday in the Third Week of Easter

St Athanasius, Bishop, Doctor of the Church

2nd May 2022

Reading

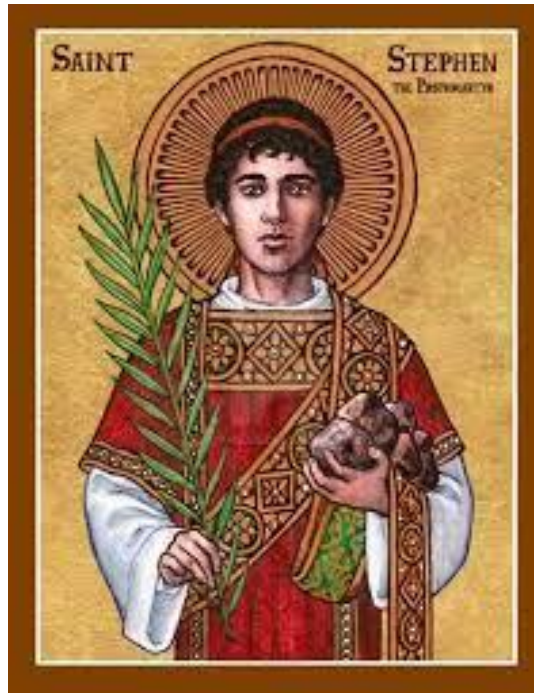
Acts 6:8-15 (RSV)

The Arrest of Stephen

STEPHEN, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyre'nians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cili'cia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. ¹¹ Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹² And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, ¹³ and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." ¹⁵ And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Reflection

WE READ the Acts of the Apostles during Eastertide with a keen sense of the excitement and joy of the earliest Christian community. Yet quite early on we meet some of the crises that young community experienced. One of these is the story of the shiny new deacon, Stephen, one of seven appointed to look after the day to day life of the church ('to serve tables' is the phrase). No sooner than Stephen is appointed (Acts 6:5), he is arrested and put on trial. He is an eloquent preacher, as we hear in Acts 7, but by the end of the chapter he is stoned to death.



There are some versions of Christianity where life is presented as a kind of enchanted garden, where nothing goes wrong, and everyone is kept happy and safe. In their extreme form, these versions offer material prosperity, and many an American pastor has built a luxury life-style on this model. These versions are not the ones we find in the New Testament or in the history of the Church. Often God's faithful people experience suffering and setbacks. We have been reminded of this not least by our recent difficulties.

Yet, as William Cowper's hymn reminds us, 'Behind a frowning Providence/ [God] hides a smiling face'. There is a complex relationship between a General Providence and Particular Providence. The one is about how a loving God has ordered all things. The other is about how you and I experience him amidst the ups and downs of my life. So, in the great scheme of things, we are alive on the one planet in a remote corner of the universe which can sustain life. We are surrounded by beauty and our lives are graced by love and kindness. We are adopted by God as his children and invited to live with him for ever in the Eternal Life of the Resurrection. That is how 'General Providence' works. As for Particular Providence, this is much more mysterious. As I look back on my life, I can easily count my blessings but I can't begin to figure out how they work. It's even harder when I try to look at others' lives. Particular is certainly particular!

So, the story of Stephen brings us up short both after Christmas – Boxing Day is St Stephen’s Day and we suddenly put on red vestments – and now soon after Easter. The Early Church is a remarkable phenomenon – the way things so quickly spread – but, without the stories of adversity, without the martyrdoms, it would seem like an enchanted garden. The two lines of ‘God moves in a mysterious way’ which precede those quoted earlier gives us this salutary warning: ‘Judge not the Lord by feeble sense/ But trust Him for His grace’.

SS Philip & James, Apostles

Tuesday 3rd May.

Collect

O God, who gladden us each year with the feast day of the Apostles Philip and James: grant us, through their prayers, a share in the Passion and Resurrection of your Only-Begotten Son, so that we may merit to behold you for eternity. 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. Amen.

Reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (RSV)

The Resurrection of Christ

15 Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, ²by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Reflection

The Apostolic Faith

TODAY we celebrate together a pair of apostles who are commemorated together only because their relics were brought to Rome at the same time. In St John's Gospel we learn that St Philip is from Bethsaida, as were Peter and Andrew, and we learn that Philip introduced Nathaniel – whom the other Gospels call 'Bartholomew' – to Jesus (John 1:41) and most of what we know about Philip we find out in the Fourth Gospel. It is Philip who asks Jesus how to feed the 5,000. Later, Philip's Greek name makes him a natural link for the Greeks who come to the Jerusalem Passover celebrations (John 12:20-22). At the Last Supper Philip asked Jesus to show the disciples the Father, which leads to Jesus explaining the unity of the Father and the Son. He goes on to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor and is thought to have been martyred in what is now called Turkey.

St James, referred to as 'the brother of the Lord', is also known as James the Less, and St James the Just. We should be aware that those called 'brothers' in Aramaic were often cousins, and this fits with what we believe about Jesus, that he was born of a virgin who had no other children. It also fits with James being called 'son of Alphæus'. James was not one of the Twelve but was leader of the Church in Jerusalem for about thirty years, until his martyrdom. The Church in Jerusalem was conservative and we read in the Acts of the Apostles of the fierce debate (Acts 15) and hear some of the fall-out in the argument between Peter and Paul (Galatians.2:11-21), where Peter had been of one mind with James.

On this feast St Paul gives us what was already an established Creed of the Palestinian Christian community. As such it gives us the earliest summary of the apostolic faith, the message which the apostles set out to preach to the whole world. The credal formula has two parts: first, that Christ died and was raised from the dead; second, that this dying and being raised was 'for our sins' and 'on the third day'. But there are four acts altogether: Christ died, he was buried, he was raised from the dead, and he appeared to his disciples. This appearing to his disciples included Peter and the Twelve (Matthias being now counted as number 12, presumably), then to 500 disciples, then to St James the Less, then to all the apostles – clearly more than the Twelve are counted in this category – and finally to St Paul, the famous vision of the Risen and Glorified Christ on the Damascus Road.

The English Martyrs (1535-1680)

Wednesday 4th May

Collect

Almighty God, who in our country raised up martyrs from every walk of life to vindicate the authority of your Church in teaching and worship: grant through their intercession, we pray, that all our people may be gathered once again to celebrate the same sacraments under the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading

Matthew 10:17-20 (RSV)

Dragged before governors and kings

¹⁷ Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹ When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; ²⁰ for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Reflection

The English Martyrs

Many men and women – priests and laity - were martyred in England and Wales in the period 1535-1680 and have subsequently been recognised by the Church as saints. At the same time, many Christians from the Reformed tradition also lost their lives during these tempestuous times. Most martyrs were put to death for refusing to compromise their beliefs. A particular relevance of this feast for us in East Hendred is that this part of Oxfordshire – then Berkshire – was a centre of recusancy, an area where there were many Catholics, openly and secretly, and a place of particular risk, where priests were hidden in priest holes and mass was said secretly. We think particularly of Hendred House, the chapel of which has been here since the thirteenth century, and where, in penal times there was much covert activity. For a time the chapel had to be disguised as a log shed.

Persecution of Christians seemed for a time last century to dwindle but in fact it has been estimated that more people lost their lives for their Christian belief in that century than in the previous 1900 years. In parts of the world this persecution continues and, even in the liberal democracies of the West, we now face considerable opposition. It would be over-dramatic, perhaps, to call this opposition 'persecution', but it is not an easy time to confess and practise the Catholic Faith.

Today we remember – and offer our prayers and support to – the neighbouring parish of English Martyrs, Didcot, on their feast of title. We also pray for our Anglican brothers and sisters. When the Church of England revised its Calendar, it included a feast 'Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Era' in which were specifically mentioned those on the different sides of the religious divide who suffered for their beliefs. That said, we continue to pray, as today's Collect puts it 'that all our people may be gathered once again to celebrate the same sacraments under the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ'. Moreover, we do not begin to underestimate the heroism and suffering of the Catholic martyrs and we seek their prayers.

Thursday in the Third Week of Easter

5th May

Reading

John 6:44-51 (RSV)

The Living Bread come down from heaven

Jesus said to the crowd: ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. ⁴⁶Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.

Reflection

WATCHING the early development of the Christian Church in the Acts of the Apostles is fascinating. Today we pause to look at the Gospel. The Gospel passages this week are extracts from John 6, an encounter with Jesus' teaching about the Bread from Heaven. This, says Jesus, is 'the bread of God...which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world' (*John 6:33*). It was not Moses who (past tense) **gave** this bread, but the Father who (present tense) **gives** the true bread from heaven. The chapter began with the Feeding of the Five Thousand on the far side of the Sea of Galilee and continues with Jesus, back in Capernaum, teaching that 'unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you' (6:53). This doctrine sounded a bit like cannibalism to its first audience and often arouses hostility and incredulity whenever it is first encountered nowadays. For Jews, blood is life-blood, ritually drained out of animals before they are cooked and eaten, and drinking blood – especially human blood – is disgusting as well as in contravention of the Jewish Law. No wonder 'many of his disciples drew back and no longer walked with him' (6:66).

Catholics are content to take these words literally, but various attempts have been made to re-interpret the words figuratively, and even to say that Jesus is not talking about 'flesh' and 'blood' in a eucharistic sense. It is certainly true that we cannot simply equate 'flesh' with 'bread' and 'blood' with 'wine'. In Catholic teaching, the whole Christ – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – is present in both eucharistic species. We may see and taste what looks and tastes like bread and wine – just as many who looked at Jesus saw just the human Jesus. But, just as the eye of faith sees beyond to Christ the Son of God, so we look beyond the appearance of bread and wine to Christ's Divine Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Believing in the One who is the Bread of Life, says the Fourth Gospel (6:47), is the gateway to eternal life. Abiding in Jesus is the response and reward for Jesus abiding in us (6:56). It is the Spirit that gives life (6:63). No one can come to Jesus 'unless it is granted him by the Father' (6:65). We have no where else to turn, as Simon Peter says to Jesus, for Jesus has 'the words of eternal life' (6:68). We find ourselves saying with Peter, 'we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God', that is, the Messiah, the Christ. (6:69)

Friday in the Third Week of Easter

6th May

Reading

Acts 9:1-20 (RSV)

The Pharisee Saul is converted on the Damascus Road

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. ⁴And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' ⁵And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; ⁶but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Anani'as. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Anani'as.' And he said, 'Here I am, Lord.' ¹¹And the Lord said to him, 'Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying, ¹²and he has seen a man named Anani'as come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' ¹³But Anani'as answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name.' ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' ¹⁷So Anani'as departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his

eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, ¹⁹ and took food and was strengthened.

For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus. ²⁰ And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'

Reflection

The Conversion of St Paul

THE CONVERSION of St Paul, described in Acts 9, is a pivotal moment in the spread of Christianity. In the Calendar, as revised in 1970, we don't meet all the saints as once we did, which makes our encounter with the saints on weekdays – as in today's reading – particularly worth noticing.

The most famous conversion story not only in the Bible but in the whole of Christian history, gives us a proper example of what it is to turn to Christ. It isn't just an awakening of a dormant faith, as when someone who has been baptised but never practised, still less the story of a journey from a separated Christian community into the Catholic Church. Saul the Pharisee was persecuting Christians, seeking to imprison them and endanger their lives. He became Paul the Apostle, arguably the most influential Christian theologian of all. He remains a controversial figure, not quite fitting in with some of our ideas. For liberal Protestants, he has sometimes been seen as the one who hijacked the Jesus of the Gospels and turned him into someone else. That's an extreme view – and, of course, wrong – but it does remind us how much of our understanding of the nature and person of Christ owes to the Epistles of St Paul. At the other end, we have, in the Catholic Church, Paul presented as the second most important apostle of all. Buried in the basilica 'outside the walls' of Rome, he ranks with St Peter, buried under the square of St Peter's. The Roman Church is the Church of St Peter and St Paul, and the First Eucharistic Prayer, the Roman Canon, lists Paul after Peter in the list of apostles. Poor old Matthias, who is brought into the Twelve to replace Judas, is relegated, it seems, to the second list, later in the prayer.

St Paul, who calls himself the least of the apostles, 'unfit to be called an apostle, because [he]persecuted the church of God' (1 Corinthians 15:9), is ranked as an apostle because he was a witness of the Risen Christ. Having said that, the Christ whom he met on the Damascus Road, was the Ascended and Glorified Christ. It was a vision and not an encounter, such as the apostles had on the evening of Easter Day and the following Sunday.

The May Magnificat

Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ
(1844–89)

MAY is Mary's month, and I
Muse at that and wonder why:
Her feasts follow reason,
Dated due to season—

Candlemas, Lady Day;
But the Lady Month, May,
Why fasten that upon her,
With a feasting in her honour?

Is it only its being brighter
Than the most are must delight
her?

Is it opportunist
And flowers finds soonest?

Ask of her, the mighty mother:
Her reply puts this other
Question: What is Spring?—
Growth in every thing—

Flesh and fleece, fur and feather,
Grass and greenworld all
together;
Star-eyed strawberry-breasted
Throstle above her nested

Cluster of bugle blue eggs thin
Forms and warms the life within;
And bird and blossom swell
In sod or sheath or shell.

All things rising, all things sizing
Mary sees, sympathising
With that world of good,
Nature's motherhood.

Their magnifying of each its kind
With delight calls to mind
How she did in her stored
Magnify the Lord.

Well but there was more than
this:
Spring's universal bliss
Much, had much to say
To offering Mary May.

When drop-of-blood-and-foam-
dapple
Bloom lights the orchard-apple
And thicket and thorp are merry
With silver-surfèd cherry

And azuring-over greybell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash
wet like lakes
And magic cuckoocall
Caps, clears, and clinches all—

This ecstasy all through
mothering earth
Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's
birth
To remember and exultation
In God who was her salvation.