



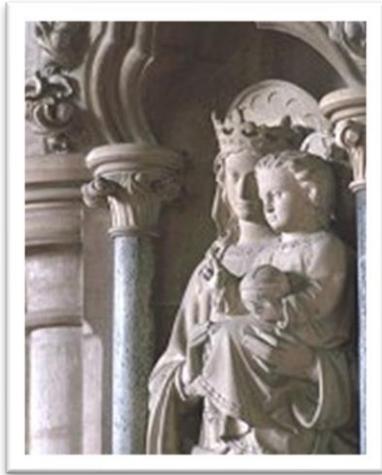
St Bartholomew, Apostle, 24th August

East Hendred Catholic Parish

Food for the Journey

Bulletin 23rd-30th August 2020

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Twenty-First Sunday
in Ordinary Time (A)
23rd August 2020
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

Inclina, Domine

Cf Ps 86:1-3

Collect

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever

First Reading

Is 22:19-23 (RSV)

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace: ¹⁹ I will thrust you from your office, and you will be cast down from your station. ²⁰ In that day I will call my servant Eli'akim the son of Hilki'ah, ²¹ and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your girdle on him, and will commit your authority to his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. ²² And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. ²³ And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place, and he will become a throne of honour to his father's house.

Psalm 138:1-3, 6, 8 R/8

**R/ O Lord, your merciful love is eternal; |
discard not the work of your hands.**

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
In the presence of the angels I praise you.
I bow down toward your holy temple. **R/**

I give thanks to your name
for your merciful love and your faithfulness.
You have exalted your name over all.
On the day I called, you answered me;
you increased the strength of my soul. **R/**

The Lord is high, yet he looks on the lowly,
and the haughty he knows from afar
O Lord, your merciful love is eternal;
discard not the work of your hands. **R/**

Second Reading

Romans 11:33-36 (RSV)

³³ O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
³⁴ 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his
counsellor?'
³⁵ 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?'
³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be
glory for ever . Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia. You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church.
And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 16:13-20 (RSV)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesare'a Philippi, he asked his
disciples, 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' ¹⁴ And they said, 'Some
say John the Baptist, others say Eli'jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the
prophets.' ¹⁵ He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' ¹⁶ Simon
Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' ¹⁷ And Jesus
answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has
not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you,
you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of
death shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom
of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and
whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' ²⁰ Then he strictly
charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Apostles' Creed

I BELIEVE in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,

and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer over the Offerings

O Lord, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church. 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.

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

Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you. 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 21 Year 2)

Monday	2 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 11-12	Matthew 23:13-22
Tuesday	2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 14-17	Matthew 23:23-26
Wednesday	2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18	Matthew 23:27-32
Thursday	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	Matthew 24:42-51
Friday	1 Corinthians 1:17-25	Matthew 25:1-13
Saturday	1 Corinthians 1:26-31	Matthew 25:14-30

Sunday 22A

Jeremiah 20:7-9

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 16:21-27

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FOR YOUR PRAYERS

AUGUST is the month of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

HOLY FATHER'S AUGUST PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect, and guidance.

LEBANON LINK

As we pray for the victims of the explosion, living and departed, please do what you can. The Christian area of Beirut has been severely damaged.

Two links:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/tom-and-jerry039s-beirut-blast-relief-fund?utm_source=whatsapp&utm_medium=chat&utm_campaign=p_cf+s_hare-flow-1 or [UK Head Office - Aid to the Church in Need](#)

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

John Castle, Daniel Cuevas, Louise Woodhouse, Sr Catherine, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Angus Clark, Karen Greig, Kitty Teasdale, Mary Mc Nichol, Andrew Gunn, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol, Anne North, Christine Robinson, John Stringer

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Alphonsus Hunt, Harriet Hunt, Jabez Booker, Matilda Dearlove

NOTICEBOARD

THIS WEEK

Mass will be said, Monday to Friday, 9am on Facebook, East Hendred Catholic Parish, see www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk E-Mail intentions to Fr Andrew at aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or phone him on 01235 835038. St Mary's will be open for prayer on Thursday, 2pm-4pm Masses next Sunday are at 11.15am and 6pm. Please e-mail hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk before Friday lunchtime or phone Fr Andrew: 01235 835038. 11.15am will be on Zoom and 6pm on Facebook.

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CHILDREN CELEBRATE ('Children's Liturgy' for the Holidays) See

the August Handbook. Also see [Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

A children's liturgy resource for Sunday 23 August. Download accompanying [illustration](#).

LOCAL CHARITIES

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

Jackymattam@btinternet.com needs clothes for boys (6-8, 14 yrs) and girls (4-6, 11-13yrs)

BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183 To set up an SO or arrange Gift Aid, contact : hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Weekday Readings*

24th-28th August 2020 Week 21[ii]

OVERVIEW OF THE WEEK

ON MONDAY of this week we celebrate the feast of an apostle – the somewhat obscure ‘St Bartholomew’. Nowadays, the feasts of most of the Twelve do not displace Sundays: all the more reason to notice them midweek, as they happen. Feasts get special readings, memorials don’t. So the other saints we observe this week - Blessed Dominic Barberi, St Monica, and St Augustine of Hippo - do not require us to stray from the cycle of weekday readings. There will be a note on each of these three influential heroes of the faith, but no special readings.

For the first reading this week, we move to the New Testament, to look at two books – St Paul’s Second Letter to the Thessalonians (Tuesday and Wednesday) and his First Letter to the Corinthians (Thursday and Friday). Thereafter we shall be staying with the First Letter to the Corinthians for a little while. We continue with reading St Matthew’s Gospel at Mass.

The Second Letter to the Thessalonians dates either from AD51-52, following immediately on from the First Letter, which is the oldest Christian writing we have. An alternative theory is that the second letter was written by someone unknown, in which case it could have been written later in the century. Whether he wrote once or twice to the Church in Thessalonica, St Paul was writing from Corinth. The First Letter to the Corinthians dates from AD56-57 and is definitely by St Paul himself. He is writing from Ephesus to a church with a mixed membership of Jews and Gentiles.

*

[Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition \(RSVCE\)](#)

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Monday 24th August

St Bartholomew was originally from Cana in Galilee and is usually identified with Nathaniel, who was introduced to the Lord by St Philip. The Lord described Nathaniel as 'an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile' (Jn 1:47). Tradition tells us that Bartholomew preached the Gospel in Arabia, India, and Armenia, where he was flayed alive. He became thus the patron saint of tanners.

Collect

Strengthen in us, O Lord, the faith by which the blessed Apostle Bartholomew clung wholeheartedly to your Son, and grant that through the help of his prayers your Church may become for all the nations the sacrament of salvation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Reading

John 1:45-51

Philip said to Nathaniel 'Come and See'

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathan'a-el, and said to him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' ⁴⁶ Nathan'a-el said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathan'a-el coming to him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' ⁴⁸ Nathan'a-el said to him, 'How do you know me?' Jesus answered him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' ⁴⁹ Nathan'a-el answered him, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' ⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, 'Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.' ⁵¹ And he said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.'

Reflection

AT THE beginning of a film, a play, or a book, the scriptwriter, playwright, or author has to establish easily and gradually the people in the story, who they are and how they relate to each other. So it is with the first chapter of the Fourth Gospel. These are the early days when the disciples are called to follow Jesus. Jesus is followed by two disciples of St John the Baptist, Andrew and the beloved disciple (whom we presume to be John). Andrew then recruits his brother Simon Peter. Then one of them – we can't be sure whether it was Andrew, Simon Peter, or Jesus himself because it just says 'he' – recruits Philip. Philip in turn recruits Nathanael (known elsewhere as Bartholomew). Each of these vocation stories involves some labelling: to begin with we have St John the Baptist calling Jesus 'the Lamb of God, God's Chosen One'. Andrew calls Jesus 'teacher and Messiah'. Jesus names Simon 'Cephas' (or 'rock', hence 'Peter'). Philip tells Nathanael that Jesus is the One of whom the Law and the Prophets wrote. Jesus calls Nathanael 'an Israelite in whom there is no guile' and tells him that he already knows who he is. Nathanael calls Jesus 'Rabbi' and 'Son of God' and 'King of Israel'. Finally Jesus himself recalls the story of Jacob's Ladder, saying that they will see heaven opened and angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. The key phrase in this passage – for the disciples' contemporaries and for us who come after – is Philip's invitation to Nathanael: 'Come and see'. The only way we can effectively further the mission of the Gospel is to seek out every opportunity to say to others, 'Come and see'. We cannot control whether they come or what they see and, as with the disciples, it is only by being around Jesus for a little time that followers become believers.

Tuesday 25th August

Collect for Week 22

O GOD, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever

Reading

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 14-17

Stand firm and hold to the Traditions which you were taught by us

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way;

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. ¹⁴ To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

Reflection

MISSING yesterday's opening chapter of the Second Letter to the Thessalonians – because of the special readings for St James' Day – we now find ourselves, in chapter 2, thinking about the *Parousia* – the Second Coming of Christ. Christians from the very beginning have looked for the Second Coming, at the End of Time, but our perspectives have changed as the years have passed. In the very early days, many people thought that it would happen within their life-time. St Paul himself in 1 Cor 15:6 talks

about the Risen Christ 'appear[ing] to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.' One of his aims, clearly, is to dampen down speculation, as he does in today's reading. Verses omitted from the reading make it clear that, without the miraculous apocalyptic signs that precede what Paul calls 'the day of the Lord', nothing will happen. In the meantime, we should 'stand firm and hold to the traditions...taught by word of mouth or letter'.

This is a message for every age because features of our own times, like so many that have gone before, have been interpreted over-excitedly as signs of the End. Faith means living as though the Kingdom might break in imminently but we should live with our hearts comforted 'and establish them in every good work and word'. There is a place for excitement in our Faith but most of the time, it is hard slog, and all the more rewarding for that. But the calm rhythm of our inner life should give us the quiet conviction that we have been chosen 'from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.' Hearing and responding to the Gospel, the Good News, is the means whereby we obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wednesday 26th August

Blessed Dominic Barberi (1792-1849) was an Italian Passionist who taught theology in Rome and, as Principal of the Passionists, discerned a vocation to convert England to the Catholic Faith. In his final years he laboured long and hard in this country, facing opposition. On 8th October 1845 he received St John Henry Newman into the Church at Littlemore.

Collect

O GOD, who chose the Priest Blessed Dominic Barberi to be a minister of your salvation, so that by his teaching and example many might find peace and reconciliation in your Church: mercifully guide our steps, we humbly pray, along that same way of love and truth until by your grace we gain is eternal reward. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Reading

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18

Warning against Idleness

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 labour 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. ¹³ Brethren, do not be weary in well-doing.

¹⁴ If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.

¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Reflection

WE ARE now at the end of the Second Letter to the Thessalonians and we can hear St Paul continuing to calm down the excitement felt by many about the Coming of Christ, thought by them to be imminent. As we heard yesterday, the argument St Paul makes is that the End cannot come until the disturbing apocalyptic events have taken place. But here, in Thessalonica, it seems that some have abandoned hard work as pointless and decided to live a life of idleness as they wait around for the End to come. The stark command is 'If any one will not work, let him not eat' and St Paul reminds them that, when he was with them, he himself toiled night and day so as not to be a burden on them.

Before we leave this letter, we ponder the question of who wrote it. We cannot be certain that the writer is St Paul. The arguments for and against his authorship are finely balanced. But if it isn't St Paul writing, and we are reading something from later on in the first century, rather than mid-century, that too could make sense. Paul himself lived until the mid-60s. There is a reference in chapter 2:4, a verse missed out in yesterday's passage, to 'the temple of the Lord' and that probably rules out anything later than AD70, when the Jerusalem temple was destroyed. The argument that the necessary signs of the End Time had not yet come if the letter were written after the destruction of Jerusalem is implausible. AD70 was certainly the end of something.

Thursday 27th August

St Monica (c331-387) was born in what is now Algeria, then part of the Roman Empire. She was the mother of St Augustine (whom we celebrate tomorrow). She prayed for his conversion and died soon after his baptism.

Collect

O GOD, who console the sorrowful and who mercifully accepted the motherly tears of Saint Monica for the conversion of her son Augustine: grant us, through the intercession of them both, that we may bitterly regret our sins and Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Reading

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sos'thenes,

²To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ; ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reflection

THE OPENING verses of the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians are a conventional greeting to the Church there and to Sosthenes, whom we first encounter in Acts 18:17. He was the ruler of the synagogue who was beaten up, presumably for having supported St Paul in Corinth. Though today's reading is very much an introduction to the Letter, it mentions the Lord Jesus Christ no fewer than nine times in nine verses. There is also an allusion in verse 8 to how this Letter of sixteen chapters will end: it will be finally about 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

We already know, from the many mentions of the Lord, that a major theme in this Letter will be unity in Christ Jesus in place of factionalism. St Paul stresses that the Corinthian Christians have already received the grace of God, that they have been enriched in speech and knowledge, and not lacking in any spiritual gift. In other words, their incorporation into Christ – an important emphasis in the First Letter to the Corinthians – is complete. This will be the springboard for St Paul as he goes on to challenge people saying that they 'belong to Paul' or 'belong to Apollos' or 'to Cephas' or 'to Christ'. He will go on to make the point that Christ is not divided, that he, Paul, was not the one crucified for them, and that it was not in his name that people were baptised. In fact, beyond the household of Stephanus, Paul cannot recall having baptised any of them. He is setting his stall out to bring dissension in the Church to an end.

Friday 28th August

St Augustine (354-430) was born in what is now Algeria, and, despite his mother's Christian belief, became a Manichean and, though unmarried, fathered a child. At the age of 33, he was converted, and baptised by St Ambrose. He became Bishop of Hippo Regius, a Roman province in Algeria, and, an eloquent and persuasive theologian, he was recognised as one of the 'Latin Doctors of the Church'. His *Confessions* continues to be influential and the Rule of St Augustine, written about 400 AD, continues to inspire canons, friars, and nuns.

Collect

RENEW in your Church, we pray, O Lord, the spirit with which you endowed your Bishop Saint Augustine that, filled with the same spirit, we may thirst for you, the sole fount of true wisdom, and seek you, the author of heavenly love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Reading

1 Corinthians 1:17-25

Christ the Power and Wisdom of God

Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.'

²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the

wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Reflection

THERE was clearly a realisation amongst the early Christians, many of whom were uneducated, that the Gospel was not getting through to many of the worldly wise. In one sense, this is how it should be. A religious system which discriminated in favour of the well-educated and against those who are too simple to understand it would be élitist and unjust. Jesus himself memorably said 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to infants' (Mt 11:25). Some of Jesus' immediate companions were fishermen and probably not all that well-educated. The early preaching of St Peter and St Paul would confirm what was already known from the preaching of Jesus - that there was no obvious correlation between people's intelligence and their acceptance of the Gospel. So it was that St Paul came up with the concept of 'The Foolishness of God'. He quotes Isaiah 29:14, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart', and talks of the Crucified Christ as 'a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles'. The Greek word Paul uses for 'stumbling block' is *skandalon*: it is a different word from the one used in the Greek Old Testament and has connotations of a snare or trap. The Cross is a *skandalon* for Jews, says Paul, because they seek signs. If the Cross is a sign, then it is surely a sign of failure. Meanwhile, Gentiles, informed by Greek philosophy are in pursuit of wisdom and, according to the wisdom of the world, the Cross absurd. It is folly, utter foolishness.

The force of this passage from St Paul, paradoxically, is that its imagery is both intelligent and powerful. The designs of God are, of course, way beyond any consideration of worldly reasoning and part of the secret of the success of the Gospel, as it has spread through the centuries and as it continues to spread, is that it is particularly Good News for the poor. At the same time, we need make no apology for the intellectual rigour of our faith: philosophy and theology, science and technology, art, music, and literature have all flourished because of men and women of faith.