

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

Fourth Week of Lent

14th- 21st March 2021



Reflection – Mothering Sunday

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast. *cf Is 66:10-11 (Introit for Lent 4)*

THE subject of Jerusalem is put in front of us today in the Introit. The link between Jerusalem and our own mothers gave this Sunday the title 'Mothering Sunday' or, in the land of Motherhood and Apple Pie (and on another date), 'Mother's Day'. This theme has now become much less obvious with the disappearance of Galatians 4 as the first reading. Read at Mass invariably on Lent 4 until 1970, Galatians 4 speaks of Abraham's two women - the slave woman and the free. These two women correspond to two Jerusalems. The first corresponds to the earthly Jerusalem, in slavery with her children, the second to the Jerusalem above who is free and our mother (Galatians 4:25f), the Church Triumphant in the Communion of Saints. So, on this mid-Lent Sunday, we look ahead to the victory which is brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a time of judgment for the world. As today's Gospel tells us,

'the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil...' [but whoever] 'does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. (*Jn 3:19, 21*)

The Gospel also includes the most well-known verse in the Bible, at least amongst Evangelicals. 'John 3:16' is so readily recognisable a Bible reference, that it is apparently a common 'bumper sticker'.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

It is a wonderful promise but must be seen in its context – light and darkness, and the vital choice each one of us must make. In the Passion and Death of Christ we are confronted by a supreme act of love but also with a crisis of judgment. Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother: heaven is our mother. We must choose between light and darkness. We follow the light and insofar as we place our faith and trust in the cross, we shall inherit eternal life. Figuratively, just as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness, the Son of Man has been lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. Those are the themes as we move closer to Passiontide and the chance once more to walk the way of the cross and share a glimpse of the glory of the resurrection.

Fr Andrew

14th – 21st March 2021

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

Church open from 9am to late afternoon each day

Sunday 14 th March	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Year B) [Purple] 9.30am Mass [please book] Pro populo 6pm Mass [please book] RIP Arthur Langley 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23 Ephesians 2:4-10 John 3:14-21
Monday 15 th March	<i>Of the Fourth Week of Lent</i> [Purple] 9.15am Mass Isaiah 65:17-21 John 4:43-54
Tuesday 16 th March	<i>Of the Fourth Week of Lent</i> [Purple] 9.15am Mass Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12 John 5:1-3, 5-16
Wednesday 17 th March	St Patrick, Bishop [White] 9.15am Mass Isaiah 49:8-15 John 5:17-30
Thursday 18 th March	<i>Of the Fourth Week of Lent</i> [Purple] 10am School Mass * RIP Irene McDonagh Exodus 32:7-14 John 5:31-47
Friday 19 th March	ST JOSEPH [White] 9.15am Mass Wisdom 2:1, 12-22 John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Saturday 20 th March	<i>Of the Fourth Week of Lent</i> [Purple] No Mass Jeremiah 11:18-20 John 7:40-52
Sunday 21 st March	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Year B) [Purple] 9.30am Mass [please book] Pro populo 6pm Mass [please book] Jeremiah 31:31-34 Hebrews 5:7-9 John 12:20-30

* Different readings are normally used for the School Mass.



EAST HENDRED CATHOLIC PARISH

Lent 2021

Sundays in Lent

- 9am Morning Prayer for Children (CSTV)
- 9.30am Parish Mass (CSTV)**
<https://www.churchservices.tv/easthendred>
- 6pm Holy Mass (CSTV)**
<https://www.churchservices.tv/easthendred>

Mondays in Lent

- 9.15am Holy Mass (CSTV)**
followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
I: The Agony in the Garden
- 6pm Vespers (Facebook)
- 7.30pm Lenten Retreat: 'Finding Hope in Scripture' with Sr Hyacinthe OP
www.godwhospeaks.uk > **[finding-hope-in-scripture](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/finding-hope-in-scripture)**

Tuesdays in Lent

- 9.15am Holy Mass (CSTV)**
followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
II: The Scourging at the Pillar
- 6pm Vespers (Facebook)
- 7.30pm 'The God Who Speaks' (Zoom)
(2nd March 'Gathered Together in Christ')
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4315430307?pwd=cDloZzNnRzM4SUtUM2RsbFZmZ0FRdz09;>

Wednesdays in Lent **9.15am** **Holy Mass** (CSTV)
*followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
III: The Crowning with Thorns*

1.30pm Bible Stories for School (Teams)
link provided to parents by St Amand's School

6pm Vespers (Facebook)

Thursdays in Lent

9am Morning Prayer &
Exposition until:

9.55am Benediction (CSTV)

10am **School Mass** (CSTV)

*followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
IV: The Carrying of the Cross*

6pm Vespers (Facebook)

7.30pm 'Verso L'Alto' with Bishop Philip

<https://www.portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk/live-mass.php>

Fridays in Lent

9am Morning Prayer (CSTV)

9.15am **Holy Mass** (CSTV)

followed by Rosary V: The Crucifixion

5pm Ecumenical Evensong at Holy
Trinity Parish Church, Ardington
(open to the public)

(Facebook: Benefice of Wantage Downs)

<https://m.facebook.com/pages/category/Church/Benefice-of-Wantage-Downs-109686177340271/>

Confessions: *after Mass (once church re-opens for public worship) or
by arrangement*

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

BOOKING FOR MASS

Demand means that it is helpful for those who book electronically to book each week and not to request a repeat arrangement. Those who cannot book electronically are offered the facility of a repeat arrangement on condition that they let us know in good time if they are planning not to come on any particular occasion.

ST MARY'S OPENING

We are open from 9am most days until late afternoon. Come along to Mass on weekdays. . Masks and social distancing required. Book for Mass on Sundays. E-mail hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk before 12 noon on Fridays. After that, contact Fr Andrew on 01235 835038 or aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk Space limited. Book early.

ST MARY'S ON LIVE-STREAM

Last Sunday (7th March) 345 people looked in from 145 addresses, with 105 staying long enough to take part in the Mass. Homes with more than one viewer and those browsing explain the largest figure. 105 were from the UK, 28 from Ireland, 12 from elsewhere.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

Two sessions in Lent in support of this year's theme: Monday's Lent Retreat (see below) and the Tuesday Bible Study (details on the Lent programme).

VERSO L'ALTO-REACH THE HEIGHTS! An Hour of Prayer and Praise

Bishop Philip invites you to join him and the Cathedral clergy online every Thursday 7.30 to 8.30 pm during lockdown to pray for safety, for the sick and for key workers, for the Diocese and for a speedy end to the pandemic. <https://www.portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk/live-mass.php>

LENTEN RETREAT: 'FINDING HOPE IN SCRIPTURE'

Sr Hyacinthe Defos du Rau, OP, Formation for Mission Team Leader
Department for Evangelisation, Tel: 0150681874, writes:

Every Monday evening during Lent, for six weeks, at 7.30pm we will discover aspects of the virtue of hope from six different Bible passages. Our reflection will be followed by a time of live-streamed adoration and Compline with the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph. Register here to participate:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtc-2grjkiGtU8vPFJea2ktvR5U0MZ1mrL>

CAFOD Lent Appeal. Abdella lives in an extremely remote and mountainous part of Ethiopia. It takes him ten hours a day to collect water. He says his life is being wasted as he has no time for anything else. Give today to reach vulnerable communities around the world with water and to provide other vital support. Donate online at cafod.org.uk/lent or phone 0303 303 3030 or by using a CAFOD envelope. You can also give via text. Text LENT 5 to 70460 to donate £5 or Text LENT 10 to 70460 to donate £10* or LENT 20 to 70460 to donate £20 .Many thanks for your support.

*Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message you'll be opting in to hear more about CAFOD's work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £10 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text LENTNOINFO to 70460.

Here is the link to a short film about Abdella that could be shown at livestream masses and on face book. Abdella film 2minutes 32 Thirds [Lent Appeal 2021: Abdella's walk for water | CAFOD on Vimeo](#)

LOCAL CHARITY

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

Jackymattam@btinternet.com helps with the poor locally and items for her may be left outside the door of Cozens Farm inside plastic bags.

She is looking urgently for girl's clothes age 2-4 years. Also if anyone has any clean rugs, there are families with no floor coverings at all.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION

Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

FIRST COMMUNION GROUP

Pray for children beginning First Communion Preparation through St Amand's School: Felicity, Keeleigh, Joshua, Anna, Eamonn, Luca, Mia, Isobel, Julia. Pray also for their families and for the catechists: Helen Ellery, Ann-Marie Kershaw, Anna Loughlin.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Kristina, Baby Martha, John Castle, Petal Connell, Daniel Cuevas, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Sr Catherine, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Angus Clark, Karen Greig, Kitty Teasdale, Mary McNichol, Andrew Gunn, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol, Christine Robinson, Rose

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 14th-20th March: Thomas Dearlove, William Dearlove, Pietro Melotti, Beatrice Burgess, Martin Power, Jane Frances Dunn, Irene McDonagh, Dorothy Aldworth.

GIVING: THE PARISH BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT

BANK DETAILS: PRC DTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183

To arrange Gift Aid, contact : hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

A donation to the parish may be made on
www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979
aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Administrators

hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk is monitored by the Parish Administrator and her Assistant.

WHEN CAN I EAT SIMNEL CAKE?

MOTHERING SUNDAY – a.k.a. Refreshment Sunday – is traditionally the Sunday in the middle of Lent when we slightly relax our discipline of fasting and eat cake. The cake prescribed was Simnel Cake. No icing but lots of marzipan, including twelve balls of marzipan, representing the twelve apostles. In days gone by, those in service at the great houses were allowed home on Mothering Sunday and this cake was a welcome reunion celebration.

Customs change – and not everyone wants to eat cake on Refreshment Sunday, and getting through a whole cake in a day can be especially hard. So, although Simnel Cake is Lenten – no icing, remember – it has gradually become something people eat at Easter, when there can be days and days of cake.

In commercial terms, it would not really be possible to limit any food to one day. Without all those office and school Christmas lunches in December, even Turkey and Plum Pudding would be hard to supply. So another of the one day foods – Hot Cross Buns – would not appear in the shops if we really managed to limit them to one day. My own solution to that is to keep the supermarkets in business by eating Hot Cross Buns throughout Lent. A pleasant change from Autumn Crumpets, Summer Scones, and the festive fruit cake of Christmas and Easter.

There was almost a riot a few years ago when the shops produced 'Noughts and Crosses' Buns. Somebody had lost the plot and the novelty seems to have faded away. But producing goods that miss the point is part of the muddle of our society. Little – and not so little – chocolate eggs are around well before Easter and well after Eastertide. We have forgotten how to fast and how to feast. I don't think anyone has yet produced all-year-round Simnel Cake, which again answers my question.

When can I eat Simnel Cake? Now! Or at Easter! Or both!

Fr Andrew

CHILDREN'S PAGES

- (1) Watch out for '**Morning Prayer for Children**', 9am on Sundays, for ten minutes on Church Services TV. Nobody will mind if you're still eating your cornflakes or wearing your jim-jams. The theme of today's Gospel at Mass is Jesus the Light of the World.
- (2) How about writing your **Lent prayer or promise** on a third of an A4 sheet? You could then send the image in to us at hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk? We should then send it on to Libby Holderness who will print it out and make a paper chain of the promises to display at church. There it will be (cue: fanfare) very soon.
- (3) We have got some small **wooden craft crosses** which we shall leave in St Mary's porch for children to collect and decorate. They will help us celebrate 'Passiontide', the second half of Lent, when our thoughts move towards the events of Holy Week.
- (4) **Special stuff for Sunday** 14th March, the Fourth Sunday in Lent follows on the next couple of pages.

Enjoy

Fr Andrew

YEAR B
Fourth Sunday of Lent
Sunday 14th March 2021
The Light of the World
John 3:16-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "God loved the world so much that he sent his only son to be the light and to save those who believed in him. The Light of the World has come, but many turn away from it and prefer the darkness. Anyone who does wrong is afraid of the light because their badness will be plain for all to see. The good man has nothing to fear from the light because he is close to God."

Reflection

Jesus is the light of the world. What happens when you switch the light on in a darkened room? The darkness disappears and you can see everything clearly. Jesus helps us to see the way to his heavenly father and chase away temptations which could lead us away from God. Nicodemus came to see Jesus secretly at night, hoping that no one would see him.

He was a Pharisee, a deeply religious man who studied the scriptures and kept all the commandments of the Jewish Law. The other Pharisees did not like Jesus or his teachings, but Nicodemus believed in him and was afraid the others would find out. If we do something wrong, we don't want others to see. No one likes to be found out. That is what Jesus meant about people preferring darkness and doing things out of sight, hoping no one will see. When we are doing the right thing, we have nothing to hide, and we don't mind being seen.

At Baptism we were given a candle as a symbol of the light we receive from Jesus. The love of Jesus and the flame of faith have burned in our hearts since that day.

As children of the light we have nothing to fear, knowing that Jesus is always close to us on our journey through life.

Closing Prayer

Jesus you are the Light of the World. You promised that if we stay close to you, we will never be lost in the darkness. Help us to stay with you always.

Amen

*



Speak, Lord



Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23
Psalm 136
Ephesians 2:4-10
John 3:14-21

SUNDAY LITURGY FOR CHILDREN

Year B — 4th Sunday of Lent



Jesus said to

NICODEMUS

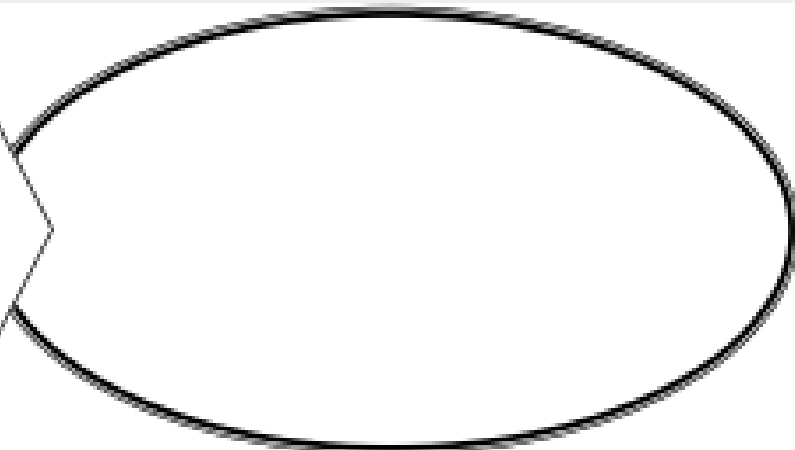
**"GOD SO LOVED
THE WORLD ...**

HE GAVE US HIS OWN _____."

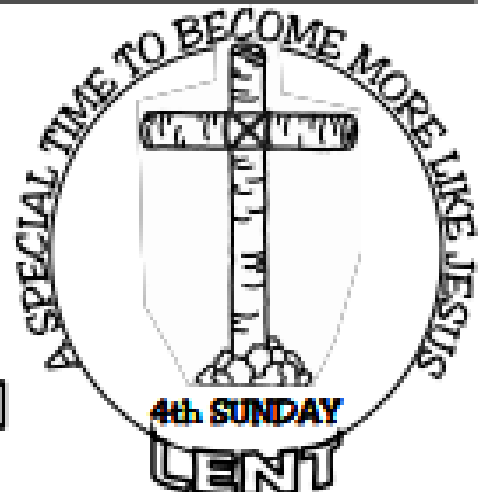


Who is the Son of
God?

Draw a picture of this
special gift God gave
the world.



**TODAY is the
FOURTH
SUNDAY
of LENT**



East Hendred Catholic Parish



Fourth Sunday in

Lent (B)

14th March 2021

Antiphons,

Prayers and Readings

Entrance Antiphon

Lætare Ierusalem

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

cf Is 66:10-11

Collect

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. 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

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23 (RSV)

In those days: All the leading priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.¹⁵ The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; ¹⁶ but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, till there was no remedy.... ¹⁹ And they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious vessels. ²⁰ He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.

²² Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: ²³ 'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.'"

Psalm 137:1-6, R/ 6

R/ O let my tongue cleave to my palate if I remember you not!

By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept,
remembering Zion;
on the poplars that grew there we hung up our harps.

For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.
'Sing to us,' they said, 'one of Zion's songs.'

O how could we sing the song of the Lord
on foreign soil?
If I forget you, Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!

O let my tongue cleave to my palate
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
as the first of my joys!

Second Reading

Ephesians 2:4-10 (RSV)

Brethren: God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—⁹ not because of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Communion Antiphon

Dominus linivit oculos meos

The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed, I saw and I believed in God.

Cf John 9:11, 38

Prayer after Communion

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading (Lent Week 4)

Monday	Isaiah 65:17-21	John 4:43-54
Tuesday	Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12	John 5:1-3, 5-16
Wednesday	Isaiah 49:8-15	John 5:17-30
Thursday	Exodus 32:7-14	John 5:31-47
Friday	Wisdom 2:1, 12-22	John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Saturday	Jeremiah 11:18-20	John 7:40-52
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (B)	Jeremiah 31:31-34	
	Hebrews 5:7-9	John 12:20-30

Ave Regina Cælorum

HAIL, Queen of Heaven, beyond compare,
to whom the angels homage pay;
hail, Root of Jesse, Gate of Light,
that opened for the world's new Day.

Rejoice, O Virgin unsurpassed,
in whom our ransom was begun,
for all thy loving children pray
to Christ, our Saviour, and thy Son.

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

15th – 19th March 2021

Monday in the Fourth Week of Lent

15th March

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. 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

Reading

Is 65:17-21

The Glorious New Creation

17 ` For behold, I create new heavens
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.

18 But be glad and rejoice for ever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,
and her people a joy.

19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.

20 No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the child shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

Reflection

THE LAST couple of chapters of the Book of Isaiah give us a vision of a new world, a world where a just social and moral order will prevail over mere temple ritual. So the prophecies take us beyond the local to the universal, beyond a religious system to the way the whole world is ordered. Heaven is God's throne and the earth his footstool: he cannot be contained or defined by any temple. Jerusalem ceases to be the domain of a group of adherents but, reconfigured, becomes the mother to all believers. As the old Epistle for Mothering Sunday reminded us, 'the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother'. (Gal 4:26) In our journey through life, we are heading for the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven (Rev. 21:1-3), and God's New Creation, a place of houses and vineyards. Houses are the place of secure homes. Vineyards are the place where a settled community grows and flourishes. Talk of 'the new heavens and the new earth' is a reminder to the Church under persecution – whether from hostile forces or from plague – that our homeland is indeed in heaven (Phil 3:20) that 'here we have no lasting city' for 'we seek the city which is to come.' (Heb 13:14)

Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

16th March

Reading

Ezek 47:1-9, 12

The Stream of Water Flowing from the Temple

47 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. ² Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me round on the outside to the outer gate, that faces toward the east;^[a] and the water was coming out on the south side.

³ Going on eastward with a line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. ⁴ Again

he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the loins. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. ⁶ And he said to me, 'Son of man, have you seen this?'

Then he led me back along the bank of the river. ⁷ As I went back, I saw upon the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ And he said to me, 'This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the stagnant waters of the sea, the water will become fresh. ⁹ And wherever the river^[E] goes every living creature which swarms will live, and there will be very many fish; for this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes..... ¹² And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.'

Reflection

WHEN we come across the passage from Ezekiel 47, about the stream of water flowing out from the temple, and irrigating a wide area, so that fruit trees and medicinal plants may grow by the riverside, we are reminded of a similar passage at the end of the Book of Revelation. Here the river of the Water of Life flows not from the threshold of the temple – as it does in Ezekiel – but from the throne of God and of the Lamb. We are also reminded of the *Vidi aquam* sung in Eastertide: 'I saw water flowing from the Temple.' The Paschal Mystery is when the prophecy of Ezekiel is fulfilled. Christ is the Water of Life, which we encounter in the miracle at Cana, where water from the purification jars becomes the new wine of the marriage feast. We encounter it too in the story of Jesus and the woman of Samaria, as they meet and draw water at the well. The Water of Life is not only fresh water, enabling things to grow and thrive, but water which quenches our spiritual thirst. As we journey on through Lent, towards Passiontide and Easter, we seek, through Christ, to grow and thrive, and we seek, in Christ, to encounter him who quenches our thirst.

St Patrick

Wednesday 17th March

Reading

1 Pet 4:7-11

⁷ The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane and sober for your prayers. ⁸ Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Practise hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Reflection

WE DON'T quite know the circumstances in which this letter was written but we do know from the text that those who received it – not to mention us who form a later readership – were under severe pressure from persecution of some kind. In our own world, we reflect that Christians worldwide are under tremendous pressure from hostile forces and, along with everyone else, from the COVID-19 threat. So, where RSV has 'keep sane and sober for your prayers', the Jerusalem Bible has 'keep a calm and sober mind'. This is the time for a great spiritual taking of stock – or, as someone half-jokingly put it, a time where God has put the whole world into a season of Lent. Nothing will ever be the same again and that includes, if we 'keep a calm and sober mind', much that could be transformed for the better. To think of a few examples, we shall see immense changes in health care provision, in education, and (judging from the turmoil in the markets) in the economic order. Will the government rise to the challenge of protecting the vulnerable?

We have to adapt the message of Scripture for our times. So practising hospitality and rendering service, which the reading encourages, has particular demands if our opportunities to meet one another socially are drastically curtailed. So another transformation – though the medium has its limits – is also about electronic communication and how we use it.

Thursday 18th March

Reading

John 5:31-47[†] (RSV)

The Father who sent Jesus has himself borne witness to him.

³¹ If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; ³² there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true. ³³ You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴ Not that the testimony which I receive is from man; but I say this that you may be saved. ³⁵ He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. ³⁶ But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen; ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent. ³⁹ You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from men. ⁴² But I know that you have not the love of God within you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. ⁴⁴ How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵ Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. ⁴⁶ If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?'

Reflection

JESUS is in dispute with the Jewish leaders for most of John 5. The chapter begins with Jesus healing in Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day, a day on which no work should be done. The man healed has been ill for thirty-eight years so - no question - the healing could have waited until another day. Jesus therefore is deliberately choosing a feast day - we are not quite sure which one - and a Sabbath Day. His explanation is that since, in accordance with rabbinical teaching, only God works on the Sabbath, he is showing himself to be one with the Father. Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working still, and I am working.' (John 5:17) From verse 19-47 of chapter 5, Jesus is the only one speaking and, though the passage begins with Jesus

[†] Different readings are normally used for the School Mass.

standing accused of wrong-doing – breaking the Sabbath – it is the Jewish leaders by the end of the chapter who stand accused. As with any trial – though this is an informal one – witnesses are called. In his defence Jesus has cited, in the first place, John the Baptist and then, more significantly the works that he performs which bear witness that is the Father who has sent him. Only the source of Good – the Father - could be the author of the self-evidently good work of healing which Jesus accomplishes. In the last part of the chapter – today’s Gospel reading – Jesus turns the tables on the Jewish leaders by saying that it is they who are accused and the witness to the charge against them is Moses – the Law of Moses, which for them is the ultimate authority. They stand accused by Moses and, if they do not accept his witness, how will they ever believe the words of Jesus?

ST JOSEPH

Friday 19th March [AB1]

Reading

Heb 11:1-16

The Meaning of Faith

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the men of old received divine approval. ³ By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.

The Examples of Abel, Enoch, and Noah

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through his faith he is still speaking. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.^[a] ⁷ By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith.

The Faith of Abraham

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. ⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Reflection

TODAY'S reading comes from the Office of Readings in the Divine Office, the daily prayer of the Church. As time goes on, more and more people are drawn into the saying of the Office, especially where public Mass is scarce. The Office is a large and varied tapestry of readings and prayer, so different bits of it will suit different dispositions and needs.

In this passage from the Letter to the Hebrews, St Joseph comes at the end of a very long list of faithful people in the Old Testament who trusted in God's promises. Under the New Covenant, we play our part in that continuing task of faithfulness - trusting in God's promises. We too are strangers and exiles on the earth, seeking a homeland.

[AB2]

Revised Standard Version Bible, Ignatius Edition, copyright © 2006, by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.

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

The English translation and chants of the Roman Missal © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Calamus Licence 2438. CCLI Church Copyright 20498. CCLI Music Reproduction Licence 490994 (category B).

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MARK,

Chapter by Chapter

Mark 8 *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*

Feeding the Four Thousand

8 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him, and said to them, ² 'I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; ³ and if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come a long way.' ⁴ And his disciples answered him, 'How can one feed these men with bread here in the desert?' ⁵ And he asked them, 'How many loaves have you?' They said, 'Seven.' ⁶ And he commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. ⁷ And they had a few small fish; and having blessed them, he commanded that these also should be set before them. ⁸ And they ate, and were satisfied; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ⁹ And there were about four thousand people. ¹⁰ And he sent them away; and immediately he got into the boat with his disciples, and went to the district of Dalmanu'tha.

The Demand for a Sign

¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him. ¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.' ¹³ And he left them, and getting into the boat again he departed to the other side.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod

¹⁴ Now they had forgotten to bring bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵ And he cautioned them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.' ¹⁶ And they discussed it with one another, saying, 'We have no bread.' ¹⁷ And being aware of it, Jesus said to them, 'Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five

thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?' They said to him, 'Twelve.' ²⁰ 'And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?' And they said to him, 'Seven.' ²¹ And he said to them, 'Do you not yet understand?'

Jesus Cures a Blind Man at Bethsaida

²² And they came to Beth-sa'ida. And some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, 'Do you see anything?' ²⁴ And he looked up and said, 'I see men; but they look like trees, walking.' ²⁵ Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly. ²⁶ And he sent him away to his home, saying, 'Do not even enter the village.'

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesare'a Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do men say that I am?' ²⁸ And they told him, 'John the Baptist; and others say, Eli'jah; and others one of the prophets.' ²⁹ And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.' ³⁰ And he charged them to tell no one about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men.'

³⁴ And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his life? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

FINE.