

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

Second Week of Lent

13th – 20th March 2022



The Transfiguration of Christ

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

13th – 20th March 2022

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

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

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

Sunday 13th March	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT <i>CAFOD Collection</i> 9.30am Parish Mass 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's 6pm Holy Mass	[PURPLE] <i>Pro populo</i> <i>The Holy Father (elected 2013)</i>
<i>(Readings: Lent Week 2)</i>		
Monday 14th March	<i>of Second Week of Lent</i> 9.15am Holy Mass	<i>[Purple]</i> <i>I The Agony in the Garden</i>
Tuesday 15th March	<i>of Second Week of Lent</i> 9.15am Holy Mass	<i>[Purple]</i> <i>FM John Joseph Eyston 1917</i> <i>II The Scourging at the Pillar</i>
Wednesday 16th March	<i>of Second Week of Lent</i> 9am Morning Prayer 11am Requiem Mass	<i>[Purple]</i> <i>III The Crowning with Thorns</i> <i>RIP Deirdre Griffiths</i>
Thursday 17th March	<i>St Patrick, Bishop, Patron of Ireland</i> 9.15am Holy Mass (<i>attended by school</i>)	<i>[White]</i> <i>Intentions of St Amand's School</i> <i>IV The Carrying of the Cross</i>
Friday 18th March	<i>Day of Abstinence [Purple]</i> <i>of Second Week of Lent</i> 8.30am Holy Mass at Hendred House	<i>[Purple]</i> <i>(Fr David O'Sullivan)</i> <i>V The Crucifixion</i>
Saturday 19th March	ST JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BVM <i>No Mass</i>	<i>[White]</i>
Sunday 20th March	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT 9.30am Parish Mass (<i>Fr Martin Flatman</i>) 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's (<i>Canon Peter Turbitt</i>) 6pm Holy Mass (<i>Fr David O'Sullivan</i>)	[PURPLE]

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

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION

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

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTION

Monday 14th Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese
Tuesday 15th Community of St Patrick, St Clement, Jersey
Wednesday 16th Community of St Patrick, East Ilsley
Thursday 17th Parish of St Joseph & St Margaret, Clitherow, Bracknell
Friday 18th Parish of St Joseph, Basingstoke
Saturday 19th Parish of Immaculate Conception & St Joseph, Christchurch; Holy Father(inaugurated 19th March 2013)

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Recently departed: Dame Catherine Wybourne, Deidre Griffiths

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

PRAY FOR PEACE



St Sophia's Cathedral. Kyiv

Two Ways of Helping

(1) Caritas-Spes

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

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

(2) Second Collection

On **Sunday, 13 March (Second Sunday of Lent)** (and following the CAFOD Family Fast Day on Friday 11 March), there is a second collection after Mass in aid of the CAFOD Lent Appeal.

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

Those in our parishes who would like to contribute to this appeal can use the CAFOD Lent Appeal envelopes already distributed: if they intend their donations specifically to benefit those in need in Ukraine, **please use envelopes marked 'Ukraine'**. Envelopes not marked Ukraine contain donations for the African cause.

Reflection – *Transfiguration*

PETER recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, God's Saviour. As if to confirm this insight, Jesus takes him, along with John and James, up a mountain to pray. There the disciples see Christ in glory. Moses, the leader of Israel's pilgrimage to the Promised Land is there. So is Elijah, Israel's greatest prophet, the herald of salvation. The messenger of the covenant, says Malachi, is like fuller's soap and St Mark tells us that Jesus' 'clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.'

Overshadowing everything is the cloud of God's glory and as at Jesus' baptism the voice from heaven calls him 'the beloved Son'. But this time there is a command added: 'Listen to him'. In faith the disciples have seen who Jesus is. God confirms this faith by granting a vision. So runs the story of the Transfiguration, as told by three of the evangelists, and, despite the supernatural language and imagery, it remains a very human story. In fact Peter, rather characteristically, combines insight with an ill-judged spontaneity. 'Let's make three booths', he says – as if the disciples could add meaning to what was a gift of meaning to them!

And yet the suggestion about booths has its use. It gives us a clue as to what the story might mean. St Luke tells us that this episode was 'about eight days after' the discussions of Caesarea Philippi – where Peter recognises Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, and the disciples learn that Jesus will be killed and raised from the dead. 'Booths' suggests the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles (or booths) is a colourful Jewish festival lasting eight days and its climax, on the eighth day, is a day of new wine, libations of water (symbolising the wells of salvation and the outpouring of the Spirit) and processions with branches. Originally a harvest festival, Tabernacles symbolised for Zechariah the in-gathering of all nations. The camping in booths symbolised the nomadic journeying in the desert and the festivities of the last day of the feast reflected the glory of the Promised Land. All these associations – new wine, washing, outpouring of the Spirit, processions with branches, the in-gathering of the nations, the Promised Land – are caught up in the glory of Christ. They are transfigured by his messiahship.

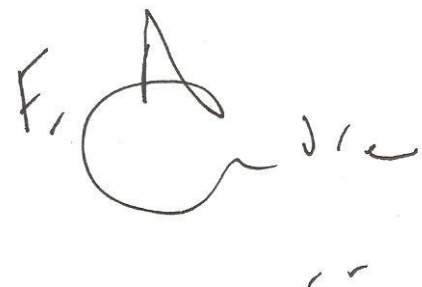
Peter's suggestions about the booths and the mention of 'about eight days' give us one clue to the meaning of the Transfiguration – the realisation of all that is foreshadowed in the Feast of Tabernacles. St Matthew and St Mark have a different lapse of time. 'After *six* days...'

they begin their accounts. This is not, chronologically, a significant difference – there’s only a couple of days in it – yet it unlocks a whole new area of meaning.

In Exodus 24, Moses ascends Sinai with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu – names less easy to recall than Peter, John and James! - and, after six days, hears the voice of God from the cloud. This time it is not the giving of the commandments (Exodus 20) but instructions to build the ark, the tabernacle and the Altar, to bring into being the priesthood and to begin sacrifice. The worship of the Old Covenant was underway.

The people of Israel had been fed with quail and manna in the wilderness; they had received the commandments and ordinances. Now the whole liturgical expression of the covenant was beginning. It is surely not fanciful to see the same pattern in the gospels. The teacher from Nazareth had taught on the mountain (Matthew) and on the plain (Luke). He had fed the multitude with fishes and loaves. Now comes the focus of worship and the teacher is recognised as Lord by those who have the eyes to see and worshipped as the Transfigured Christ by those admitted to the vision. There is no mention of sanctuaries, priesthood and sacrifices: the One whom they worship is the New Temple, the High Priest and the Sacrifice.

Taking the two clues together – the clues about the Feast of Tabernacles and the story of Moses and his three companions – we see that the Transfiguration is a story about worship. Nothing should distract us from the vision of glory which we receive when we worship. Neither the teaching and proclamation which precede the experience on the holy mountain nor the work of ministry which awaits those who come down the mountain. It is that vision which gives depth to the proclamation and empowers us for the world of loving and healing to which we are called.



East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

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

LENT

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

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 6th March 2022, 183 people viewed, 54 machines looking only at St Mary's. 41 of these were in the UK and 12 elsewhere. 108 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

SYCAMORE

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

E-MAILS, WEBSITE, AND FACEBOOK

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

See also our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2022

18th – 22nd July, flying from Bournemouth Airport. The cost is £675.00 per person sharing. Single rooms available at a supplement. Full board at La Solitude (with indoor swimming pool). Special rates for those between 15-35 volunteering to help with the liturgy, looking after pilgrims, pushing wheelchairs &c. lourdes@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

GIVING



CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY – LENT APPEAL

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

See also the note on Ukraine above.

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

CHARITY: HENDRED

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

TO GIVE TO OUR PARISH BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT

BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183

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

East Hendred Catholic Parish



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

Entrance Antiphon

Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.

Tibi dixit

Cf Ps 27:8-9

Collect

O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory. 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

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18(RSV)

The Lord brought Abram outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness. And he said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chalde'ans, to give you this land to possess.' But he said, 'O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.'

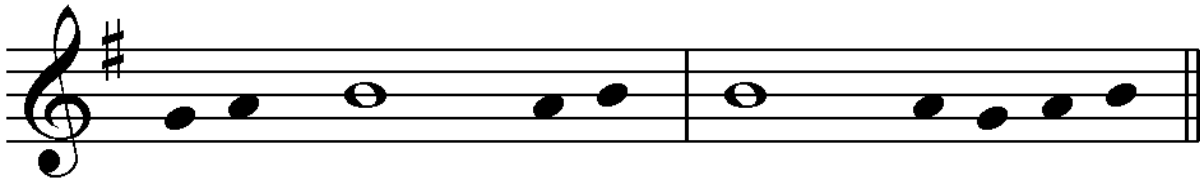
And he brought him all these, cut them in two, and laid each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram; and lo, a dread and great darkness fell upon him. Then the Lord said to Abram, 'Know of a surety that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be slaves there, and they will be oppressed for four hundred years; but I will bring judgment on the nation which they serve,

and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.' When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphra'tes'.

Psalm 27: 1, 7-9, 13-14 R/ 1

Tone I.4



R/ The Lord is my light | and my sal- va- tion.

The Lord is my light and my sal-va-tion;

() *whom* shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of *my* life;

() *whom* should I dread? **R/**

O Lord, hear my voice when *I* call;

have mercy *and* an-swer me.

Of you my heart has *spo*-ken:

() () 'Seek his face.' **R/**

It is your face, O Lord, that *I* seek.

Hide not *your* face from me.

Dismiss not your servant in *an*-ger;

you *have* been my help. **R/**

I believe I shall see the Lord's *good*-ness

in the land *of* the li-ving.

Wait for the Lord; *be* strong;

be stout-hearted, and *wait* for the Lord! **R/**

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Second Reading

Philippians 3:17 – 4:1 (RSV)

Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our

lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself. Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Gospel Acclamation



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

From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard:

This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.

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

Gospel

Luke 9:28-36 (RSV)

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Eli'jah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah' -- not knowing what he said. As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

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

Prayer over the Offerings

May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(De transfiguratione Domini)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For after he had told the disciples of his coming Death on the holy mountain he manifested to them his glory, to show, even by the testimony of the law and the prophets, that the Passion leads to the glory of the Resurrection. And so, with the Power of heaven, we worship you constantly on earth, and before your majesty without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION *after St Alphonsus Liguori (18th cent.)*

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Even though I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there, and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus. There is room in my heart for you.

Communion Antiphon *Hic est Filius meus dilectus*

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

Cf Mt 17:5

Prayer after Communion

As we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth to be partakers even now of the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading

Monday	Daniel 9:4-10	(Lent Week 2) Luke 6:36-38
Tuesday	Isaiah 1:10, 16-20	Matthew 23:1-12
Wednesday	Jeremiah 18:18-20	Matthew 20:17-28
Thursday	Jeremiah 17:5-10	Luke 16:19-31
Friday	Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28	Matt 21:33-43, 45-46
Saturday	Micah 7:14-15, 18-20	Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT (C)

Exodus 17:3-7

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

John 4:5-42

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

14th -19th March 2022

Second Week of Lent

Monday in the Second Week of Lent

14th March

Reading

Matthew 5:13-16 (RSV)

Salt and Light

Jesus said to his disciples: ¹³ You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Reflection

SCIENCE tells us that in fact salt does not lose its taste but, as the Roman first century naturalist and philosopher, Pliny the Elder, remarked in his *Natural History*, it can become adulterated and weakened. Pliny's views would be known at the time and the importance of salt was talked about in the Old Testament, giving taste (Job 6:6), and for preserving and as a part of sacrifice (Lev 2:13; Ezek 43:24). We perhaps forget how, until modern times, salt was a rarity and a luxury, hence the highly ornate salt cellars which used to be the centre piece of the tables of the rich. It does not require very much thought for us to reflect on what Jesus is asking of us when he tells his disciples that they should be 'the salt of the earth'. As for the 'light of the world', again there is more to this than the obvious meaning of the image. Israel is invited to 'walk in the light of the Lord' (Is 2:5) and be a 'light to the nations' (Is 42:6;

49:6). It is a theme to which St Luke brings emphasis (Lk 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23) and which is emphasised by St Paul (Rom 2:19). It perhaps goes without saying that, being called to be 'salt and light', we Christians are being invited to live in an attractive way which leads others to 'see [our] good works and give glory to [our] Father who is in heaven.'

Tuesday in the Second Week of Lent

15th March

Reading

Isaiah 1:10,16-20 (RSV)

Learn to do good, search for justice

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomor'rah!....

16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your doings
from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,

17 learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
defend the fatherless,
plead for the widow.

18 'Come now, let us reason together,
says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.

19 If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;

20 but if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be devoured by the sword;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

Reflection

THIS passage, from the beginning of the Book of Isaiah, relates to Isaiah, son of Amoz, a prophet in Jerusalem in the eighth century BC, working at much the same time as Hosea and Amos but in the Southern Kingdom rather than the North. Jerusalem, says the prophet, is experiencing a disaster as a punishment for unfaithfulness to the covenant. Temple worship is futile because the people are not living moral lives and are committing great injustices. But, says the Lord through his prophet, turning away from sin is still possible, and the sins of the people, though they are like scarlet, can be white as snow, if only the people turn to the Lord. This 'turning' is the essence of the Greek word *metanoia*, the word in the New Testament for repentance, and Lent is very much a time for examining the direction which we are facing and making the necessary adjustments, whether slight or drastic. Jerusalem needed a drastic re-orientation. So, it would seem, does our Western society, and this time is for the world a kind of secular Lent. We play our part most by examining and refocusing our own lives.

Wednesday in the Second Week of Lent

16th March

Reading

Matthew 20:17-28 (RSV)

A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

¹⁷ And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸ 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, ¹⁹ and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.'

The Request of the Mother of James and John

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zeb'edee came up to him, with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' ²² But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are

asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.'²³ He said to them, 'You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;²⁸ even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Reflection

THIS, the third of the predictions of the Passion in St Matthew, gives us a perspective different from the similar passage in St Mark. In St Matthew's account, Jesus is clearly deciding to head towards Jerusalem. This is the final journey, a journey which began at Caesarea Philippi with Peter's confession of faith and will end with the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. We have more detail than we had in the first two predictions of the Passion (Mt 16:21; 17:22-23). Now, the handing over to the chief priests is foretold (Mt 26:57), as is their condemnation (Mt 26:66), the handing over to the Romans (Mt 27:2), the mocking, scourging, and crucifixion (Mt 27:26-30; 27:32-44) and the Resurrection (Mt 28:1-10). The amazement and fear of the disciples which we encounter in St Mark's version of the story (Mk 10:32) is omitted.

The request of the Mother of James and John corresponds to a similar passage in St Mark (Mk 10:35ff) but in St Mark it is the disciples themselves, rather than their mother, who make the outrageous request. It is outrageous not just because it is jockeying for position – which is the very thing which runs counter to the teaching of Jesus – but because it completely misunderstands how things will be in the Kingdom of Heaven. In both accounts – Matthew and Mark – Jesus confronts James and John with what faces them – the cup of suffering. So we not only discover how the way ahead is likely to work out, consonant with the vocation of Israel to be God's suffering servant, but we also find emphasised the underlying Kingdom values 'whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave' (Mt 20:26-27).

St Patrick

Thursday 17th March

Reading

Luke 16:19-31 (RSV)

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Jesus said to the Pharisees: ¹⁹ 'There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate lay a poor man named Laz'arus, full of sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Laz'arus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Laz'arus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Laz'arus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' ²⁷ And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' ²⁹ But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

Reflection

THE GOSPEL reading is the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, a parable found only in St Luke's Gospel. Though popularly known as 'Dives', the Latin for 'rich man', the parable does not name him. He is 'a certain rich man' and it is the 'certain poor man' who is dignified with a name. 'Lazarus' - in Greek *Elieker* - meaning 'My God helps' - is the name of the poor man. Echoing in our ears as we hear this parable is the first of the Beatitudes in St Luke's version: 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God' (Lk 6:20b). Purple dye was available only to the wealthy and so, of course, was fine linen. We find similar descriptions of the well-to-do in Judg 8:26; Sir 45:10; Esth 2:6; 8:15). 'Abraham's bosom' is the

normal English phrase, though 'bosom' does not quite do the trick. The word is literally 'lap' but the sense is of being gathered to, enfolded with, one's ancestors. Though it is found only in Luke, a similar idea is common in the Old Testament (Gen 49:33; Num 27:13; Deut 32:50; Judg 2:10). Abraham of course is the original ancestor. Whereas Lazarus ends up in the bosom of Abraham, Dives finds himself in Hades, a place of torment, roughly equivalent to the Hebrew idea of *sheol*. The tables are well and truly turned in that Dives – the one who showed no mercy – is now the one who cries out for mercy. He tries a formal address – 'Father Abraham' – but St Luke has already warned us in the preaching of St John the Baptist 'do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.' (Lk 3:8). The reversal of fortunes should not surprise us: such was foretold in Our Lady's *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55). Dives does not respond well. First, he asks for Lazarus to be sent to cool him down – rather misunderstanding that there is no longer master-servant relationship possible with the one whose needs he had ignored when he was 'at his gate'. Second, he asks for urgent messages to be sent to his five brothers. The stern reply is that if the brothers do not heed Moses and the Prophets – the Scriptures – then they will not believe the word of someone who comes to them from the dead. This is very much the sting in the tail: Jesus is addressing the Pharisees and the clear implication is that they fall short in their righteousness and that, if they cannot spot the importance and significance of the ministry and preaching of Jesus, they are showing themselves unable to understand and grasp the significance of the whole Hebrew tradition.

Friday in the Second Week of Lent

18th March

Reading

Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46 (RSV)

The Parable of the Vineyard

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: ³³ 'Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴ When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; ³⁵ and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. ³⁷ Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' ³⁹ And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' ⁴¹ They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.'

⁴² Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

**The very stone which the builders rejected
has become the head of the corner;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes?**

⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it. ...'

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ But when they tried to arrest him, they feared the multitudes, because they held him to be a prophet.

Reflection

THE PARABLE of the Vineyard, today's Gospel, is found in Mark's Gospel (12:1-12) where it is clearly about the harsh treatment given to a series of messengers, culminating in the killing of the Son and Heir. It is highly allegorical: the householder is God, the vineyard is Israel, the tenants are the leaders of Israel, the messengers are the prophets, and the Son and Heir is Jesus. Matthew makes small additions to the story, such as the notion of bearing fruit (first found at Mt 3:8) and the handing on of the vineyard to those whose work will yield fruit (Mt 21:43). Our Gospel reading omits verse 44 because arguably it should be after verse 42 and in any case is omitted from many manuscripts.* It is hard to hear this parable without the echoes of the Jewish-Christian argument in the Early Church, an argument which has led to tragic consequences throughout the ages, into modern times. Equally it is impossible to avoid echoes of the simplistic supercessionist argument that God dumped the Jews, with their covenant, and replaced them with the Christians and our covenant. We need to be careful how we interpret the word *ethnos*, people. We are talking about a dispute not between Jews and Christians but between the Jewish leaders at that time and the followers of Jesus. It is possible that the whole passage needs to be seen as shaped by the generation after the first disciples, a generation that knew about the Greek version of the Old Testament (used in Mt 21:34, 36), the death of Jesus (Mt 21:38), and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Mt 21:41). Finally, as we hop around the Bible in the readings during Lent, it is worth remembering that the Parable of the Vineyard occurs late in the Gospel. By this time the Passion and Death of Christ are casting a shadow and the tension between Jesus and those who oppose him is increasing.

* 'And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but when it falls on any one, it will crush him.'