

**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

30th January – 5th February 2022

(Week 4)



Candlemas

30th January – 5th February 2022

WEEK 4 [YEAR 2]

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

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

Sunday 30th January	FOURTH SUNDAY <i>Per Annum</i> (Year C) 9.30am Parish Mass 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's 6pm Holy Mass	[GREEN] <i>Pro populo</i> <i>FM Rachel Hunt 1884</i>
Monday 31st January	<i>(Readings: Ordinary Time Year 4: Week 1)</i> St John Bosco, Founder 9.15am Holy Mass <i>for Diane Crabb and Sue Mathews (Stephen McDonagh)</i>	<i>[White]</i>
Tuesday 1st February	<i>Of Week 4</i> 9.15am Holy Mass	<i>[Green]</i> <i>RIP Pat Furlong (Annie Furlong)</i>
Wednesday 2nd February	The Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas) 9.15am Holy Mass 2.15pm Candlemas for Kids (School Service)	<i>[White]</i> <i>FM Ada Daubenay 1953</i>
Thursday 3rd February	<i>St Blaise, Bishop & Martyr</i> 9.15am Holy Mass	<i>[Red]</i> <i>FM Cecilia Hunt 1884</i>
Friday 4th February	<i>Of Week 4</i> 9.15am Holy Mass	<i>[Green]</i> <i>Thanksgiving (the Steele family)</i>
Saturday 5th February	St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr <i>No Mass</i>	<i>[Red]</i>
Sunday 6th February	FIFTH SUNDAY <i>Per Annum</i> (Year C) 9.30am Parish Mass 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's 6pm Holy Mass	[GREEN] <i>Pro populo</i> <i>FM Thomas Hunt 1884</i>

CONTACT DETAILS

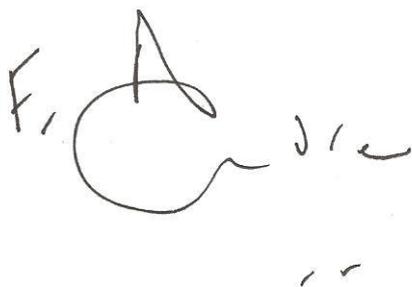
Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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THE FEAST of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple (*Candlemas*) is one of the oldest feasts of the Christian church, celebrated since the 4th century AD in Jerusalem. The story of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple is in St Luke's Gospel (chapter 2:22-38). Leviticus 12 tells us that a woman is to be purified by sacrifice 33 days after a boy's circumcision. The circumcision of Jesus having happened 'at the end of eight days' (1 January), the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (which is the old name for the feast) is reckoned as taking place on 2nd February. There are various different definitions of the 'Christmas Season' but perhaps the most ancient is that it extends for forty days, from Christmas Day until the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. That explains why some of the decorations—the Tree in our case —remain in place in some churches until we are into February.

The feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple is often known as Candlemas. We are still in the midst of winter, so the blessing of candles and processing by candlelight are helpful reminders that Christ is the Light of the world. Indeed, Simeon, who gives us the canticle *Nunc Dimittis*, used every night at Compline, describes the Christ Child as 'the Light to lighten the Gentiles' and the glory of God's people Israel. Candlemas is the time we take stock of candles, order in what is needed, and bless what we have. Whenever we reflect on it as the fifth of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary we recall that it is at the end of the Christmas Season. The Marian antiphon *Alma Mater Redemptoris* gives way to the antiphon *Ave Regina Caelorum* and we realise that the next season, Lent, also forty days long, is not far away. Indeed Candlemas is like a signpost, pointing back to the Birth of Christ and pointing forward to his Death and Resurrection.



FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S FEBRUARY PRAYER INTENTION

We pray for religious sisters and consecrated women; thanking them for their mission and their courage; may they continue to find new responses to the challenges of our times.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 30th Jan - 5th February: Edwin Brown, Laurence Lodge, Dame Teresa Rodrigues, Catherine Lillian Harris, The Lady Agnes Eyston, Thomas Hogan

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

It is sad to report that Maria Brown now has other employment and is therefore finishing at the end of January as Parish Administrator in Hendred Catholic Parish. Her assistant, Maria Lluïsa Jarne, I am pleased to say, is fulfilling the role and is the contact person. E-mail contact continues to be hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk We thank both Marias for what has been done and what continues to be done for the smooth running of the parish.

COVID REGULATIONS

The Government has relaxed regulations but we know that the virus is still very much around. We ask people therefore to continue to wear masks in church, unless they are exempt, and be vigilant about hygiene and distance. It is helpful to prepare for meeting others at Sunday Mass by taking a lateral flow test. There is no more recording of names at St Mary's but it will help St Patrick's if those attending indicate in advance their intention to come. For those who remain anxious about distancing, the pews at the back are a designated area at the 6pm Mass.

GAUDE GLORIOSA

On Saturday 5th February at 5pm there will be a public rehearsal of *Gaude gloriosa* and other works of Thomas Tallis and others, by the Gloriosa Singers in St Augustine's Church. (They originally approached St Mary's but, on acoustic grounds, St Augustine's [larger space and fewer carpets] seemed better for this particular purpose.) This is a rehearsal because the 25 singers, mostly former Oxford and Cambridge choral scholars, will be coming together simply for the joy of singing again for the afternoon after the difficulties of the last year or two. Please be seated in the south aisle chairs by 5pm and wear masks. No admission charge.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 23rd January 2022, 202 people viewed, 55 machines looking only at St Mary's. 45 of these were in the UK and 10 elsewhere. 131 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

SYNOD 2021-2023

We had a very good Zoom meeting on last Wednesday, well-attended and with many constructive ideas. There is still an opportunity to make comments on the ten questions. Please e-mail comments to Fr Andrew at aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk who will add them to the written record. Comments are welcome from newer members of the congregation, especially the young, those for whom English is a second language, and those who come occasionally or indeed never.

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, 1st February.

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 hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
See our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk
See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

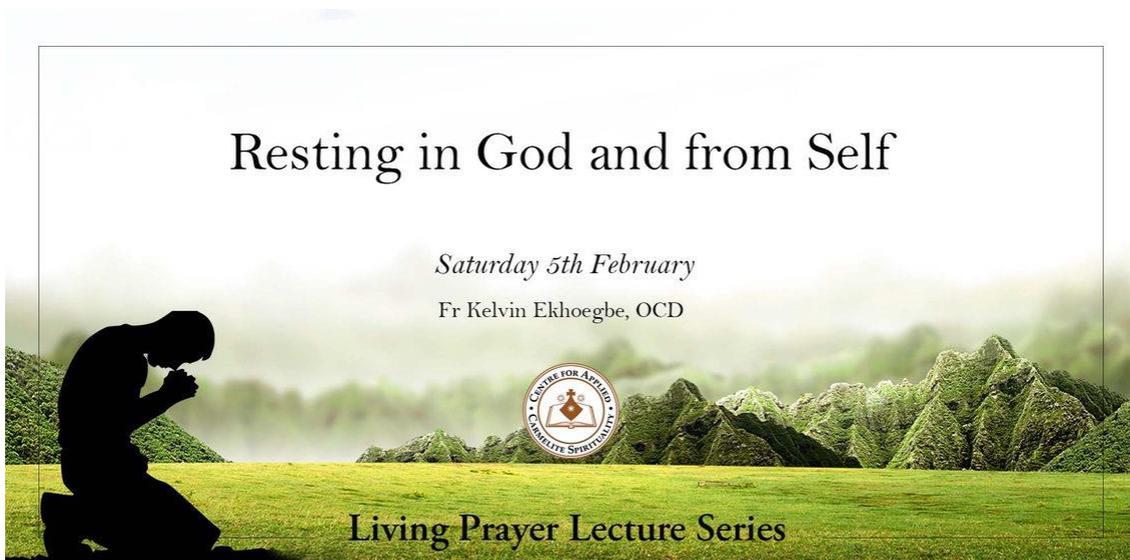
TO GIVE TO OUR PARISH BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT

BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183

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

***“Come to me all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest.”
Matthew 11:28***



Why not come along to Boars Hill or join us online to listen to Fr Kelvin Ekhoegbe as he explores the idea of 'rest' and its importance for a way of life that is attentive to God. This idea is rooted in the spirituality of the Sabbath in the scriptures and which is essential for the self-disclosure of God as well as growth in self-knowledge which St. Teresa defines as living in the truth. It will address the reality of the 'restlessness' of the human heart and the remedy revealed in scripture and in the Carmelite tradition.

You'll discover that God wishes to be totally involved in our lives as much as he wants us to be completely involved in his; that this is the basis of the first covenant of the Spirit and of the new covenant in the blood of Christ; that our 'restlessness' is a response to the invitation to return to where we can find true rest (cf. Songs 2:10&12), Carmel's own response to the call by way of pondering the Word of God which in Carmelite spirituality is the place where we get to know God and as such is vital for developing intimacy with God whose voice addresses us personally through the pages of the Bible; appreciate the need for a 'Sabbath time' in your weekly schedule as a special time for the renewal of our love relationship with God.

Hope to see you on **Saturday 5th February 2022 – 10am- 12 noon (UK)**

ENROL NOW



Connect with us Online and on Social Media



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East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Fourth Sunday in
Ordinary Time (C)
30th January 2022
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory to praise you. *Salvos nos fac Ps 105:47*

Collect

Grant us, Lord our God, that we may honour you with all our mind, and love everyone in truth of heart. 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

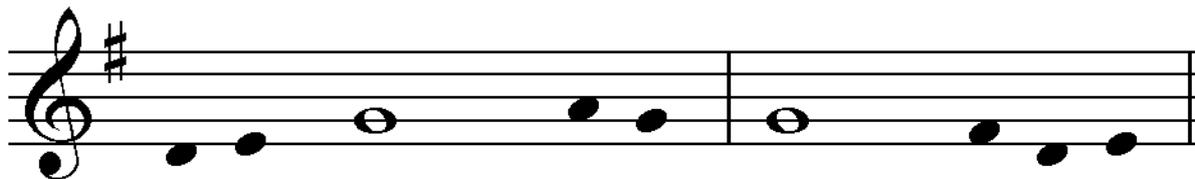
First Reading

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19 (RSV)
Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' But you, gird up your loins; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.'

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R/ My mouth will tell of your jus-tice. | ()

*In you, O Lord, I take re-fuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your justice rescue me, free me;
incline your ear to me and save me. R/*

*Be my rock, my constant re-fuge,
a mighty stronghold to save me,
for you are my rock, my strong-hold.
My God, free me from the hand of the wic-ked. R/*

*It is you, O Lord, who are my hope,
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.
On you I have leaned from my birth;
from my mother's womb, you have been my help. R/*

*My mouth will tell of your jus-tice,
and all the day long of your sal-va-tion,
O God, you have taught me from my youth,
and I proclaim your won-ders still. R/*

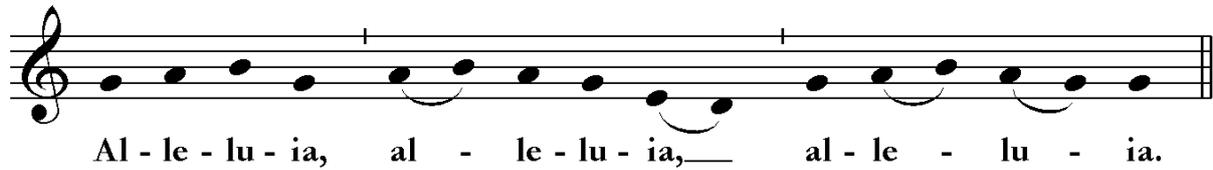
Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13 (RSV)

Earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been

fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Alleluia



I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord;
no one can come to the Father ex - cept through me.

Gospel

Luke.4:21-30 (RSV)

Jesus began to speak in the synagogue, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' And he said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Caper'naum, do here also in your own country.'" And he said, 'Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli'jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and Eli'jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar'ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli'sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'aman the Syrian.' When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away.

Prayer over the Offerings

O Lord, we bring to your altar these offerings of our service: be pleased to receive them, we pray, and transform them into the Sacrament of our redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(IV De historia salutis)

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 by his birth he brought renewal to humanity's fallen state, and by his suffering cancelled out our sins; by his rising from the dead he has opened the way to eternal life, and by ascending to you, O Father, he has unlocked the gates of heaven. And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

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 if 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

Illumina faciem

Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful love. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you. *Cf Ps 30:17,18*

Prayer after Communion

Nourished by these redeeming gifts, we pray, O Lord, that through this help to eternal salvation true faith may ever increase.. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading (Week 4 Year 2)

Monday	2 Samuel 15:13-14,30; 16:5-13	Mark 5:1-20
Tuesday	2 Samuel 18:9-10,14, 24-25,30-19:3	Mark 5:21-43
Wednesday	2 Samuel 24:2, 9-17	Mark 6:1-6a
Thursday	1 Kings 2:1-4,10-12	Mark 6:7-13
Friday	Ecclesiasticus 47:2-11	Mark 6:14-29
Saturday	1 Kings 3:4-13	Mark 6:30-34

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C)

Isaiah 6:1-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

Offertory

LOVE IS his word, love is his way
feasting with men, fasting alone,
living and dying, rising again,
Love, only love, is his way.

*Richer than gold is the love of my
Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is his way, love is his mark,
sharing his last Passover feast,
Christ at his table, host to the
twelve.

Love, only love, is his mark.
Richer than gold &c.

Love is his mark, love is his sign,
bread for our strength, wine for our
joy,

'This is my body, this is my blood',
Love, only love, is his sign.
Richer than gold &c.

Love is his sign, love is his news,
'Do this,' he said, 'lest you forget
all my deep sorrow, all my dear
blood.'

Love, only love, is his news.
Richer than gold &c.

Love is his news, love is his name,
we are his own, chosen and called,
family, brethren, cousins and kin.

Love, only love, is his name.
Richer than gold &c.

Love is his name, love is his law.
Hear his command, all who are his:
'Love one another, I have loved
you.'

Love, only love, is his law.
Richer than gold &c.

Love is his law, love is his word:
love of the Lord, Father and Word,
love of the Spirit, God ever one.
Love, only love, is his word.
better than splendour and wealth.

Richer than gold &c.
Anthony Milner

Post Communion

LOVE DIVINE, all loves excelling,
joy of heav'n, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art.
Visit us with thy salvation;
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Come, Almighty, to deliver,
let us all thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without
ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

3 Finish, then, thy new creation;
true and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee.
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Charles Wesley

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

31st January – 4th February 2022

Fourth Week *Per Annum*

Weekday Lectionary Year 2

Monday in Week 4 [Year 2]

31st January

Reading

2 Samuel 15:13-14,30; 16:5-13 (RSV)

David flees from Jerusalem and Shimei curses David

¹³And a messenger came to David, saying, 'The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Ab'salom.' ¹⁴Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, 'Arise, and let us flee; or else there will be no escape for us from Ab'salom; go in haste, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.'...³⁰But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered; and all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went....

⁵When King David came to Bahu'rim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shim'e-i, the son of Gera; and as he came he cursed continually. ⁶And he threw stones at David, and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. ⁷And Shim'e-i said as he cursed, 'Begone, begone, you man of blood, you worthless fellow! ⁸The LORD has avenged upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Ab'salom. See, your ruin is on you; for you are a man of blood.'

⁹Then Abi'shai the son of Zeru'iah said to the king, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head.' ¹⁰But the king said, 'What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeru'iah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall

say, 'Why have you done so?' ¹¹ And David said to Abi'shai and to all his servants, 'Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD has bidden him. ¹² It may be that the LORD will look upon my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for this cursing of me today.' ¹³ So David and his men went on the road, while Shim'e-i went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him and flung dust.

Reflection

TODAY'S reading is an abbreviation of the Biblical account, essentially of David's flight caused by Absalom's rebellion. We omit two dialogues – one between David and his household, the other a dialogue with Ittai, a non-Israelite devotee of David – and also encounters with Zadok and Abiathar, who are bringing the Ark from Jerusalem. We rejoin the story as David, weeping, goes to the Mount of Olives. There is then a meeting between David and Ziba (16:1-4), omitted from our reading, and we rejoin for the story of an encounter with Shimei (16:5-13). Though we know from the account that David is not guilty of regicide, Shimei, a supporter of Saul, links the rebellion to David's dealings with Saul. He is very hostile to David but David allows him to carry on cursing, throwing stones, and flinging dust, seeing his words as prophetic. David's journey has reached the lowest point so far as Absalom prepares to enter Jerusalem in triumph.

Tuesday in Week 4 [Year 2]

1st February

Reading *2 Samuel 18:9-10,14, 24-25, 30–19:3 (RSV)*

David mourns for Absalom

⁹ And Ab'salom chanced to meet the servants of David. Ab'salom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging^[a] between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on. ¹⁰ And a certain man saw it, and told Jo'ab, 'Behold, I saw Ab'salom hanging in an oak.'... ¹⁴ Jo'ab said, 'I will not waste time like this with you.' And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them into the

heart of Ab'salom, while he was still alive in the oak....²⁴ Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone. ²⁵ And the watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, 'If he is alone, there are tidings in his mouth.' And he came apace, and drew near....³⁰ And the king said, 'Turn aside, and stand here.' So he turned aside, and stood still. ³¹ And behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, 'Good tidings for my lord the king! For the LORD has delivered you this day from the power of all who rose up against you.' ³² The king said to the Cushite, 'Is it well with the young man Ab'salom?' And the Cushite answered, 'May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you for evil, be like that young man.' ³³ And the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, 'O my son Ab'salom, my son, my son Ab'salom! Would I had died instead of you, O Ab'salom, my son, my son!'... **19** It was told Jo'ab, 'Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Ab'salom.' ² So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people; for the people heard that day, 'The king is grieving for his son.' ³ And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle.

Reflection

THE BATTLE is brief. Absalom, David's rebellious son, is caught by the hair in the branches of a tree and his horse leaves him dangling there. A soldier is ordered to despatch him and, when he refuses, Joab, his commander, angrily kills Absalom himself. He is buried hastily. The story of how David found out about the death of his son is very poignant and the Cushite messenger engages in elaborate circumlocutions, evading the blunt truth of his message. David is inconsolable. What was in a straightforward sense a victory – the rebellion is brought to an end and civil war averted – leads to mourning and a sense of inconsolable loss. In 1612 Prince Harry, the elder son of King James I, died of typhoid fever. He was only 18 and the loss of the heir to the throne captured the imagination of the public. No fewer than 13 settings were made of the text 'When David heard that Absalom was slain', words which were scarcely suitable for liturgical use. The royal theme, the Throne of David, the grief of a father for the death of his son: all of these have rich resonance in the Christian tradition.

The Presentation of the Lord (CANDLEMAS)

Wednesday 2nd February



Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, we humbly implore your majesty that, just as your Only-Begotten Son was presented on this day in the Temple in the substance of our flesh: so, by your grace we may be presented to you with minds made pure. 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

Luke 2:22-40

Jesus is presented in the Temple

²² And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord') ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young

pigeons.’ ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷ And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹ ‘ Lord, now let your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation
³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.’

³³ And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him; ³⁴ and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,

*‘Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
and for a sign that is spoken against
³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also),
that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.’

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phan’u-el, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, ³⁷ and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Reflection

TODAY’S celebration marks the end of the Incarnation Cycle in the Calendar. It commemorates the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple by his parents, forty days after his birth. Formerly known as ‘the Purification’, a feast of our Lady marking her ritual purification after

childbirth, this celebration is now observed as a feast of the Lord. Mary and Joseph were obedient to the Law and brought offerings. Lev 12:6 tells us what is expected: a year-old lamb and either a turtle dove or a young pigeon. For those who are poor, as Joseph and Mary clearly were, a couple of turtle doves or two young pigeons suffice. St Luke often pairs a male and a female character in the story, so we have Simeon and Anna, both living in expectation of salvation from the Lord. Also typical of St Luke is the emphasis on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has revealed to Simeon that, though he is old, he will not die before he sees the Messiah and, accordingly, he is 'inspired by the Spirit' to come to the Temple. Meanwhile, though 'night and day' is probably an exaggeration, the prophetess Anna spends a great deal of time in the temple precincts, and, seeing the Holy Family, prophesies the redemption of Israel. Simeon's song – *Nunc Dimittis* used daily at Night Prayer in the Church – recalls the theme of Isaiah's Servant Songs (see Is 42:6; 49:6), that the Lord's Anointed will be a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel. Forty days after Christmas the days are still short and the nights long, so it is no surprise that the Church seizes on the theme of Light of Christ in a dark world and celebrates with candles. It is also traditionally the occasion on which the candles for the year – at church and at home – are blessed.

Thursday in Week 4 [Year 2]

3rd February

Reading

1 Kings 2:1-4,10-12 (RSV)

David's Instruction to Solomon

2 When David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, **2** 'I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man, **3** and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; **4** that the LORD may establish his word which he spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a man on the throne of Israel.'..... **10** Then David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. **11** And the time that David reigned over Israel was forty

years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ¹² So Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was firmly established.

Reflection

THE DEATH of King David, almost a thousand years before Christ and, for us, three thousand years ago is preceded by a farewell speech. These 'last will and testament' passages are not uncommon in the Scriptures: Moses (Deut 33), Joshua (Josh 23), and Samuel (1 Sam 12) all make such a speech. David, despite a chequered life was undoubtedly the Lord's Anointed, is concerned with the succession. Solomon is anointed and must succeed and the enemies of David – Joab, who killed Absalom (2 Sam 18) and Shimei who cursed David (2 Sam 16) must be punished. Solomon inheriting is the first example of inherited kingship and he inherits the early promises made through Nathan to David (2 Sam 7). David's reign is complete as the mathematics indicates (7+3 = 40 and both seven and forty are symbols of completeness.)

Friday in Week 4 [Year 2]

4th February

Reading

Ecclesiasticus 47:2-11 (RSV)

Concerning David

² As the fat is selected from the peace offering,
so David was selected from the sons of Israel.

³ He played with lions as with young goats,
and with bears as with lambs of the flock.

⁴ In his youth did he not kill a giant,
and take away reproach from the people,
when he lifted his hand with a stone in the sling
and struck down the boasting of Goliath?

⁵ For he appealed to the Lord, the Most High,
and he gave him strength in his right hand
to slay a man mighty in war,
to exalt the power of his people.

⁶ So they glorified him for his ten thousands,
and praised him for the blessings of the Lord,

when the glorious diadem was bestowed upon him.
⁷ For he wiped out his enemies on every side,
and annihilated his adversaries the Philistines;
he crushed their power even to this day.
⁸ In all that he did he gave thanks
to the Holy One, the Most High, with ascriptions of glory;
he sang praise with all his heart,
and he loved his Maker.
⁹ He placed singers before the altar,
to make sweet melody with their voices.
¹⁰ He gave beauty to the feasts,
and arranged their times throughout the year,
while they praised God's holy name,
and the sanctuary resounded from early morning.
¹¹ The Lord took away his sins,
and exalted his power for ever;
he gave him the covenant of kings
and a throne of glory in Israel.

Reflection

THE BOOK Sirach, otherwise known as Ecclesiasticus, 'the Church book', concludes with praise for the great heroes of the Hebrew Faith. Today's first reading is the appraisal Yeshua Ben Sira (in Greek, Jesus son of Sirach) makes of King David. Sirach was written less than two hundred years before the birth of Christ. David, in his youth, was familiar with the wild beasts and, a shepherd boy, he slew the giant Goliath using a sling and a pebble. As king, he was a mighty warrior, but he was devout and provided for worship, attending to the music and the Calendar of feasts. He was forgiven his sins – principally the murder of Uriah and his adultery with Bathsheba – and ranks as one of Judah's three righteous kings (Sir 49:4). Eternal sovereignty is promised to his descendants (2 Sam 7:16; 1 Macc 2:57) and, as Christians view it, this is a foretelling of the coming of Christ, the Son of David.