

**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

14th – 21st November 2021



WEEK 33 YEAR 1

14th – 21st November 2021

All masses live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthundred
St Mary's is usually open each day from 9am until late afternoon.

SUNDAY 33B	Remembrance Sunday	[Black]
14th November	9.30am Requiem Mass War Memorial Mass	
	10.30am Churchyard Service (WP) and Procession to the War Memorial	
	11am Act of Remembrance	
	6pm Holy Mass	[Green] Pro populo

<i>WEEK 33 (Year 1)</i>		[white]
Monday 15th November	<i>St Albert the Great, Religious, Bishop, Doctor</i>	
	9.15am Holy Mass	
	<i>Deceased Friends and Relatives (Julie Lazarus)</i>	
Tuesday 16th November	ST EDMUND OF ABINGDON , Bishop, Joint-Principal Patron of the Diocese	[white]
	9.15am Holy Mass <i>FM Canon Luck 1919</i>	
Wednesday 17th November	<i>St Hilda, Abbess</i>	[white]
	9.15am Holy Mass	
	<i>FM Cecilia Anne Dearlove 1942</i>	
Thursday 18th November	Dedication of the Basilicas of St Peter & St Paul	
	9.15am Holy Mass	[white]
Friday 19th November	<i>Of Week 33</i>	[green]
	9.15am Holy Mass	
	<i>FM Anne Maud Eyston 1943</i>	
Saturday 20th November	<i>Our Lady St Mary on Saturday</i>	[white]
	No Mass	

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, UNIVERSAL KING		[White]
Sunday 21st November	9.30am Parish Mass	Pro populo
	12.30pm Holy Baptism	<i>Xanthe Nellie Frances Orange</i>
	6pm Holy Mass	Pro populo

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Reflection *'The Sunday Obligation' and Sin*

IMPOSING 'the Sunday Obligation' again – as the Catholic Conference of Bishops plans to do on Advent Sunday, 28th November – is a call to all Catholics conscientiously to attend Mass on Sundays (and certain Holy Days). 'The Sunday Obligation' is in obedience to the Ten Commandments and to the Paschal Mystery, through which Sunday – once the first day of Creation – becomes the eighth day, the day of the Resurrection, the beginning of Eternal Life. This, incidentally, is why Holy Baptism is normally celebrated on Sunday.

In earlier times, missing Sunday Mass was deemed a 'mortal sin'. In truth 'obligation' – like 'religion' – is more about covenant and relationship than about law and regulation. It may be a divine Commandment but it is not about compulsion. God invites. He never compels. The distinction between 'venial' sin – sin which damages our relationships – and 'mortal' sin – sin which kills our relationships – is found not only in the Catholic Catechism but also in the First Letter of St John (1 John 6:16-17):

¹⁶ If any one sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that. ¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it like this:

1862 One commits venial sin when, in a less serious matter, he does not observe the standard prescribed by the moral law, or when he disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or without complete consent.

1858. Grave matter is specified by the Ten Commandments, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and your mother.' The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger.

Fr Andrew

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

We pray this week for all affected by the ravages of war and for those who have lost their lives in combat. We pray too for the people of Afghanistan and all who are seeking to prevent and relieve the onset of famine.

HOLY FATHER'S NOVEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that people who suffer from depression or burn-out will find support and a light that opens them up to life.

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, Kitty Teasdale, Mary McNichol, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 14th -20th November: Mary Eyston, Adelaide Battley, Canon Thomas Luck (Parish Priest), Edith Lily O'Driscoll, Gerrard Felle, Rose Anne Rooke, Gertrude Corby, Marjorie Mockler.



CAFOD World gifts

As we rejoice in once again celebrating Christmas with our loved ones, let us spread our joy around the world by having a CAFOD World Gift under the tree. From energy saving stoves to weatherproof crops to emergency shelters, CAFOD's virtual charity gifts help transform the lives of families living in poverty. Buy online at cafod.org.uk/worldgifts or pick up a catalogue from the back of church.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Following the 4th November Zoom meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council (known during the Emergency as 'the Standing Committee') members of the Council have produced the following:

Booking for Sunday Mass at St Mary's is no longer required. Those who attend are asked to maintain a reasonable social distance from those not in their household but this will be left to personal discretion and judgment. Any who feel particularly vulnerable may prefer to attend the 6pm Mass, which is more sparsely attended, or to come during the week.

For any who feel able to attend Sunday Mass only if socially distanced seating is provided, there will be a designated area reserved at the 6pm Mass, available without prior booking on a first come, first served basis.

For Sunday Mass, people are asked to sign in with the stewards or to scan the NHS QR code on entering the church and to notify us if they test positive within a few days of being at mass. It is suggested that, before coming to Sunday Mass, people take a Lateral Flow Test.

We continue to ask you to wear masks if you are able to do so.

Booking will still be needed for St Patrick's, from 28th November onwards, because the available space is much smaller.

We shall also be taking bookings after 8th December for the Christmas masses.

SYCAMORE

The **SYCAMORE** course for adults interested in finding out more about the Faith or preparing for baptism and/or confirmation is still in its early stages. Please contact aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk if you are interested, a.s.a.p. **SYCAMORE** meets on Tuesday at 8pm.

DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING FOR LIFE

On Wednesday 17th November please pray and fast for the end of abortion and euthanasia in this Country. On this month's Day of Prayer and Fasting for Life, we are especially asking you to fast and pray for the end of DIY abortions at home. Please join in and invite others to join as well. www.GoodCounselNetwork.com

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Though Children's Liturgy is suspended, we have now restored the Children's Corner, with resources, and there are resources at the main door too. Please make use of all this whilst children are with you in church. For those at home, there is SDC Children's Liturgy Resource. Go to this site and select the date: <http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/>

See also:

[Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time](http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/worksheets/b-ordinary_time-33.pdf) (14th November)
http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/worksheets/b-ordinary_time-33.pdf

ST AMAND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Amand's Catholic Primary School, East Hendred - your local Catholic primary school, where "pupils enter with excitement and leave smiling...staff, parents and pupils are part of a loving family" OFSTED Report, September 2019

St Amand's School has had a very busy and fruitful start to the academic year 2021-22. We have been engaging with the COP 26 meetings and reflecting on how as a school community we can take better care of our world and treasure God's Creation. We enjoyed dressing up as Saints for a Light Festival and Bonfire which was well attended by many families. RISE Theatre will spend a day with us next week thinking about God's world. Soon we will be preparing for Advent and the ever-popular KS1 Nativity and the KS2 Carol Concert. We also had a visit from a Gold Medallist, Erin Kennedy, Paralympian and former pupil of St Amand's school.

St Amand's has places available for children in various year groups and if your child will be starting Reception in September 2022 please visit our friendly school to see how much a Catholic education has to offer. If you would like to know more please contact the Headteacher Mrs Ellery on [01235 833342](tel:01235833342)

Our website: www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk
or email office.3855@st-amands.oxon.sch.uk

Follow us on Twitter @StAmandPrimary or
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/St-Amands-Catholic-Primary-School-104890787965526>

CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 7th November there were 194 hits from 62 unique viewers, with 114 on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 50 machines were in the UK and 12 in the rest of the world.

SYNOD 2021-2023

During October, the Holy Father launched a three-year consultation process with the whole Church. There are three stages. Between now and the end of April 2022, parishes are asked to produce a report to send to the diocese. These will be conflated nationally and, from September 2022 to March 2023, there will be continent-wide reflections throughout the world. Finally in October 2023, the Synod of Bishops will meet in Rome to produce a report for the Pope. Synods of Bishops are not new, nor are deliberations of Bishops' Conferences. What is new is that every parish is asking people and groups to reflect on 'What changes need to be made – in myself, in our parish, in the Diocese, to make the Church's mission today more vibrant and effective?' We shall co-ordinate our parish response via individuals and accredited groups through the Parish Pastoral Council and the St Patrick's Pastoral Committee. More soon. Meanwhile, comments and suggestions to Fr Andrew or to John Carpenter.

E-NEWS FROM THE BISHOP

Earlier this week we sent out the diocesan E-News. It is issued every Tuesday and sent to Parish Priests. If you complain about this further intrusion, we shall have to think again. It may help others if you quietly disregard it rather than asking to be unsubscribed. We can't think of an easy way of sending it on to some but not others.

E-MAILS, WEBSITE, AND FACEBOOK

Last minute changes are sometimes unavoidable and these are communicated by e-mail to the Bulletin list (as with the cancellation of masses on 4th and 5th November). Anyone may join the Bulletin list - contact hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk - and particular care should be taken of those who have no access to e-mail.

See our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

GIVING

CHARITY: AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need is appealing for funds to help the suffering Church in Syria. The situation is desperate, and they are asking for donations. Contact 0345 646 0110 or www.acnuk.org/sy21donate

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

GIVING TO THE 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

Please let us know (if you are a UK Taxpayer) if you are happy for us to claim Gift Aid. At the start of the tax year we need anybody in Gift Aid to let us know if they are no longer taxpayers. In that case we should not make a claim.

Donations to the parish: www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

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

Parish Priest:

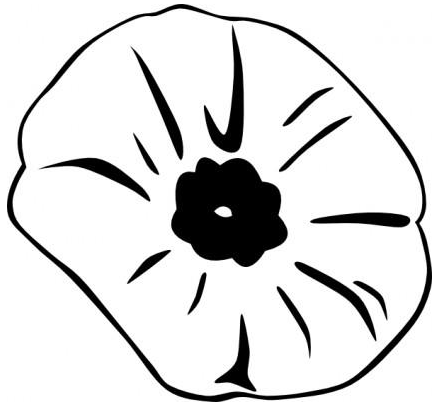
aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Office:

hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

St Mary's, East Hendred

9.30am



**REMEMBRANCE
SUNDAY**
14th November 2021
**Antiphons,
Prayers and
Readings**

Readings from the Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Entrance Antiphon

Absterget Deus

God will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying or pain, for former things have passed away.

Rev 21:4

Collect

O God, who willed that your Only-Begotten Son, having conquered death should pass over into the realm of heaven, grant, we pray, to your departed servants that, with the mortality of this life overcome, they may gaze eternally on you, their Creator and Redeemer. 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

Daniel 12:1-3 (RSV)

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Psalm 16:1, 5, 7-11R/ 1

**R/ Preserve me, O God
for in you I take refuge.**

Preserve me, O God
for in you I take refuge.

O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
you yourself who secure my lot. **R/**

[9.30am]

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart,
I keep the Lord before me always;
with him at my right hand, I shall not be moved. **R/**

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my flesh shall rest in hope.
For you will not abandon my soul to hell,
nor let your holy one see corruption. **R/**

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand, bliss for ever. **R/**

Second Reading

Hebrews 10:11-14, 18 (RSV)

Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified....¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Alleluia, **Alleluia** Stay awake and stand ready: because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming. **Alleluia.**

Gospel

Mark 13:24-32 (RSV)

Jesus said to his disciples, 'But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸ From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³² But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.'

Prayer over the Offerings

Look with favour, we pray, O Lord, on the sacrificial offerings we present to you for the souls of your servants and, just as you bestowed on them the dignity of the Christian faith, grant them also its reward. Through Christ our Lord.

[9.30am]

Preface III De Defunctis

(Christus, salus et vita)

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 he is the salvation of the world, the life of the human race, the resurrection of the dead. Through him the host of Angels adores your majesty and rejoices in your presence for ever. May our voices, we pray, join with theirs in one chorus of exultant praises, as 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

God sent his Only Begotten Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. *1 John 4:9*

Prayer after Communion

Through these sacrificial gifts, which we have received, O Lord, bestow on your departed servants your grant mercy, and, to those you have endowed with the grace of Baptism, grant also the fullness of eternal joy. Through Christ our Lord.

Salve Regina

Scripture Reading (Week 33 Year 1)

Monday	1 Macc 1:10-15, 41-43, 54-57, 62-64	Luke 18:35-43
Tuesday	2 Maccabees 6:18-31	Luke 19:1-10
Wednesday	2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31	Luke 19:11-28
Thursday	1 Maccabees 2:15-29	Luke 19:41-44
Friday	1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59	Luke 19:45-48
Saturday	1 Maccabees 6:1-13	Luke 20:27-40

CHRIST THE KING B

Daniel 7:13-14

Revelation 1:5-8

John 18:33-37

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[9.30am]

HYMNS FOR

REMEMBRANCE DAY

OFFERTORY

FOR THE healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our
word.

Lead your people into freedom,
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how, through care and
goodness,
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.

You, Creator-God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness,
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

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Company,
380 S Main Pl, Carol Stream, IL
60188*

POST COMMUNION

O GOD, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:

Beneath the shadow of thy throne,
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the
night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guide while troubles
last,
And our eternal home!

*Psalm 90
Isaac Watts (1719)*

St Mary's, East Hendred 6pm St



**Thirty-Third Sunday
in Ordinary Time (B)
14th November 2021
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Dicit Dominus

The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You will call upon me, and I will answer you, and I will lead back your captives from every place. *Jer 29:11, 12, 14*

Collect

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy the author of all that is good. 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

Daniel 12:1-3 (RSV)

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

[6pm]

Psalm 16:1, 5, 7-11R/ 1

**R/ Preserve me, O God
for in you I take refuge.**

Preserve me, O God
for in you I take refuge.
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
you yourself who secure my lot. **R/**

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart,
I keep the Lord before me always;
with him at my right hand, I shall not be moved. **R/**

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my flesh shall rest in hope.
For you will not abandon my soul to hell,
nor let your holy one see corruption. **R/**

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand, bliss for ever. **R/**

Second Reading

Hebrews 10:11-14, 18 (RSV)

Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified....¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Alleluia, **Alleluia**

Stay awake and stand ready: because you do not know the
hour when the Son of Man is coming. **Alleluia.**

[6pm]

Gospel

Mark 13:24-32 (RSV)

Jesus said to his disciples, 'But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸ From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³² But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.'

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, O Lord, we pray, that what we offer in the sight of your majesty may obtain for us the grace of being devoted to you and gain us the prize of everlasting happiness. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(I De mysterio paschali et de populo Dei)

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 through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvellous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

[6pm]

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

Amen dico vobis

Amen, I say to you: whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you will receive, and it shall be given to you, says the Lord.

Mk 11:23-24

Prayer after Communion

We have partaken of the gifts of this sacred mystery, humbly imploring you, O Lord, that what your Son commanded us to do in memory of him may bring us growth in charity. Through Christ our Lord.

Salve Regina

Scripture Reading (Week 33 Year 1)

Monday	1 Macc 1:10-15,41-43,54-57,62-64	Luke 18:35-43
Tuesday	2 Maccabees 6:18-31	Luke 19:1-10
Wednesday	2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31	Luke 19:11-28
Thursday	1 Maccabees 2:15-29	Luke 19:41-44
Friday	1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59	Luke 19:45-48
Saturday	1 Maccabees 6:1-13	Luke 20:27-40

CHRIST THE KING B

Daniel 7:13-14

Revelation 1:5-8

John 18:33-37

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

15th – 19th November 2021

Monday of Week 33 [Year 1]

15th November

St Albert the Great, Religious, Bishop, Doctor of the Church

Reading

1 Maccabees 1:10-15,41-43,54-57,62-64 (RSV)

Antiochus Epiphanes, Renegade Jews, and the Installation of Gentile Cults

¹⁰ From them came forth a sinful root, Anti'ochus Epiph'anes, son of Anti'ochus the king; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

¹¹ In those days lawless men came forth from Israel, and misled many, saying, 'Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles round about us, for since we separated from them many evils have come upon us.' ¹² This proposal pleased them, ¹³ and some of the people eagerly went to the king. He authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. ¹⁴ So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, ¹⁵ and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.....

⁴¹ Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, ⁴² and that each should give up his customs. ⁴³ All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath.....⁵⁴ Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah, ⁵⁵ and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. ⁵⁶ The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. ⁵⁷ Where the book of the covenant was found in the possession of any one, or if any one adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death.

Reflection

THE BOOKS of Maccabees are historical books but, unlike the other historical books which end with the fifth century return from the Jewish Exile, these describe events three hundred years later. The second century BC is sometimes known as the 'Inter-Testamental Period', though Catholics regard the books of Maccabees not as 'between Old Testament and New' but as very much part of the Old Testament. 1 Maccabees seems to have been written first in Hebrew – though it survived only in Greek – whereas 2 Maccabees is thought to have been written in Greek. Neither Jews nor Protestants recognise these books as part of the Hebrew Bible, the reason perhaps being that they are insufficiently critical of the Romans. The two books of the Maccabees are not in historical sequence: they both describe essentially the same events, which is why, this week, the Lectionary dodges from one to the other and back. The Maccabeans – more properly called 'the Hasmonians' – were a family of Levites whose warrior-leader, Judas, was nicknamed 'Maccabeus' from the Aramaic word for 'hammer.'

It is 175BC and, for 150 years since the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek Empire had been divided between the *diadochoi*, the generals who were Alexander's successors. The scene is set in the first nine verses of the first chapter of the first Book of the Maccabees. We take up the story with the accession of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the seventh of Alexander's successors in that 150 year period. Today's First Reading, a précis of verses 10-64 of the first chapter, outlines what happened under Antiochus IV Epiphanes: with help from some renegade Jews, Gentile religion was installed in Jerusalem. Notoriously, a gymnasium was built in Jerusalem, circumcision was discontinued, and the covenant between God and humankind was set aside.

ST EDMUND OF ABINGDON

Tuesday 16th November

Reading

2 Maccabees 6:18-31 (RSV)

The Martyrdom of Eleazar

¹⁸ Elea'zar, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. ¹⁹ But he, welcoming death with honour rather than life with pollution, went up to the rack of his own accord, spitting out the

flesh, ²⁰ as men ought to go who have the courage to refuse things that it is not right to taste, even for the natural love of life.

²¹ Those who were in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside, because of their long acquaintance with him, and privately urged him to bring meat of his own providing, proper for him to use, and pretend that he was eating the flesh of the sacrificial meal which had been commanded by the king, ²² so that by doing this he might be saved from death, and be treated kindly on account of his old friendship with them. ²³ But making a high resolve, worthy of his years and the dignity of his old age and the grey hairs which he had reached with distinction and his excellent life even from childhood, and moreover according to the holy God-given law, he declared himself quickly, telling them to send him to Hades.

²⁴ 'Such pretence is not worthy of our time of life,' he said, 'lest many of the young should suppose that Elea'zar in his ninetieth year has gone over to an alien religion, ²⁵ and through my pretence, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they should be led astray because of me, while I defile and disgrace my old age. ²⁶ For even if for the present I should avoid the punishment of men, yet whether I live or die I shall not escape the hands of the Almighty. ²⁷ Therefore, by manfully giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age ²⁸ and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws.'

When he had said this, he went at once to the rack. ²⁹ And those who a little before had acted toward him with good will now changed to ill will, because the words he had uttered were in their opinion sheer madness. ³⁰ When he was about to die under the blows, he groaned aloud and said: 'It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul I am glad to suffer these things because I fear him.'

³¹ So in this way he died, leaving in his death an example of nobility and a memorial of courage, not only to the young but to the great body of his nation.

Reflection

HOPPING over to 2 Maccabees we meet Mattathias, who has arrived from Jerusalem and settled in the provinces with his five sons. The royal officials arrive from Jerusalem to enforce the practices of pagan sacrifice. Mattathias leads an armed rebellion, taking to the hills and engaging in guerilla warfare. In his raids, he terrorises the lawbreakers – those who conform to gentile ways – and, discovering that some pious Jews were massacred because they would not fight on the Sabbath, undertook to fight on all seven days. He did not last very long, dying in about 166 BC, and passing the mantle on to the most valiant of his sons, Judas Maccabeus.

Wednesday in Week 33 [Year 1]

17th November

St Hilda, Abbess

Reading

2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31 (RSV)

The Martyrdom of Seven Brothers

7 It happened also that seven brothers and their mother were arrested and were being compelled by the king, under torture with whips and cords, to partake of unlawful swine's flesh.....

20 The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honourable memory. Though she saw her seven sons perish within a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord. **21** She encouraged each of them in the language of their fathers. Filled with a noble spirit, she fired her woman's reasoning with a man's courage, and said to them, **22** 'I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. **23** Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws.'

24 Anti'ochus felt that he was being treated with contempt, and he was suspicious of her reproachful tone. The youngest brother being still alive, Anti'ochus not only appealed to him in words, but promised with oaths that he would make him rich and enviable if he would turn from the ways

of his fathers, and that he would take him for his friend and entrust him with public affairs. ²⁵ Since the young man would not listen to him at all, the king called the mother to him and urged her to advise the youth to save himself. ²⁶ After much urging on his part, she undertook to persuade her son. ²⁷ But, leaning close to him, she spoke in their native tongue as follows, deriding the cruel tyrant: 'My son, have pity on me. I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you. ²⁸ I beseech you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. Thus also mankind comes into being. ²⁹ Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again with your brothers.'

³⁰ While she was still speaking, the young man said, 'What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king's command, but I obey the command of the law that was given to our fathers through Moses. ³¹ But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God.'

Reflection

THE INCIDENT described today is an example of how Antiochus Epiphanes sought to impose his will. Seven brothers and their mother were being compelled, under torture with whips and cords, to eat pork, which, of course, would be to break the law. It is interesting that the commandment not to eat the flesh of pigs is common to both Judaism and Islam and presumably this springs from the same suspicion of pork as is shown in the old wives' tale 'only eat pork when there's an "r" in the month'. Presumably, in a hot country without refrigeration, storing and eating pork could be quite problematic. It is hard for us to enter into the world-view of those who would die rather than eat certain meats. Revulsion only gets you so far, though one could imagine being prepared to die rather than consume human flesh. The point is that all tyrannies depend on finding whatever is the sticking point of the victim and then acting on that. For the Maccabees it was eating pork: for our fellow Christians in some parts of the present day world it is being asked to deny Christ.

Thursday in Week 33 [Year 1]

18th November

Dedication of the Basilicas of St Peter & St Paul, Rome

Reading

1 Maccabees 2:15-29 (RSV)

Pagan Worship Refused

¹⁵ Then the king's officers who were enforcing the apostasy came to the city of Mo'de-in to make them offer sacrifice. ¹⁶ Many from Israel came to them; and Mattathi'as and his sons were assembled. ¹⁷ Then the king's officers spoke to Mattathi'as as follows: 'You are a leader, honoured and great in this city, and supported by sons and brothers. ¹⁸ Now be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles and the men of Judah and those that are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons will be numbered among the friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honoured with silver and gold and many gifts.'

¹⁹ But Mattathi'as answered and said in a loud voice: 'Even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him, and have chosen to do his commandments, departing each one from the religion of his fathers, ²⁰ yet I and my sons and my brothers will live by the covenant of our fathers. ²¹ Far be it from us to desert the law and the ordinances. ²² We will not obey the king's words by turning aside from our religion to the right hand or to the left.'

²³ When he had finished speaking these words, a Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice upon the altar in Mo'de-in, according to the king's command. ²⁴ When Mattathi'as saw it, he burned with zeal and his heart was stirred. He gave vent to righteous anger; he ran and killed him upon the altar. ²⁵ At the same time he killed the king's officer who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. ²⁶ Thus he burned with zeal for the law, as Phin'ehas did against Zimri the son of Salu.

²⁷ Then Mattathi'as cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: 'Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!' ²⁸ And he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the city.

²⁹ Then many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to dwell there,

Reflection

WE NEED little or no help in understanding what is going on in the reading. The officers of Antiochus IV Epiphanes are seeking to impose Gentile culture and Gentile religion on the provincial town of Mo'de-in, as had happened in Jerusalem and they meet armed resistance. At the heart of Jewish religion is the belief in one God and an abhorrence of idolatry and pagan worship. Faithfulness to the covenant leads Mattathias to boil over with anger when a fellow Jew colludes with the Gentile authorities by coming forward to offer a pagan sacrifice. He kills not only that Jew but one of the king's officers and is obliged, with his followers, to take to the hills.

Friday in Week 33 [Year 1]

19th November

Reading

1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59 (RSV)

The Cleansing and Dedication of the Temple

³⁶ Then said Judas and his brothers, 'Behold, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it.' ³⁷ So all the army assembled and they went up to Mount Zion....⁵² Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-eighth year, ⁵³ they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering which they had built. ⁵⁴ At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. ⁵⁵ All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. ⁵⁶ So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and offered burnt offerings with gladness; they offered a sacrifice of deliverance and praise. ⁵⁷ They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the chambers for the priests, and furnished them with doors. ⁵⁸ There was very great gladness among the people, and the reproach of the Gentiles was removed.

⁵⁹ Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of the dedication of the altar should be observed with gladness and joy for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.

Reflection

JUDAS Maccabeus - third son of Mattathias - is by now commander of the rebel Jewish force and he outwits seemingly overwhelming odds and recaptures Jerusalem. The Temple is then re-dedicated and this is commemorated to this day in the annual festival of *Hanukkah*. The feast is celebrated over an eight-day period - possibly deriving originally from a delayed celebration of the Feast of Booths (*Sukkot*) - and each day an extra candle is lit on the *menorah*. Broadly speaking, the feast happens in December - dates are based on the lunar calendar - and Hanukkah has developed as a Jewish alternative to Christmas. The Jewish *Talmud* - a collection of the wisdom of the rabbis - tells us that, after the army of Antiochus IV had been repelled, it was discovered that all but one container of holy oil had been profaned. There was just one jar - usually enough for a single day - but they managed to make it last for eight days, the time it takes for a fresh supply of oil to be pressed and blessed. It is interesting to reflect that eight days is more or less how long the sanctuary light we burn before the Tabernacle in Catholic churches lasts.

