

East Hendred Catholic Parish

Four Candles

29th November – 5th December 2020



**Advent Sunday
(29nd November 2020)**

ADVENT: 'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLYCAREFUL

IT SEEMS that people will be able once more, from 3rd December, to attend church physically. This time round midweek masses (Monday-Wednesday and Friday at 9.15am and Thursday at 10am) will be celebrated in church and people are welcome to come on a first-come-first-served basis, provided that you sign in with the QR code or tell us that you have been hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. The same rules about social distancing, masks &c apply as on Sundays, where booking does still need to be made. Church is open each day from after Mass until 4pm but on Wednesday 9th December church will be used by the school and not open to others. Confession is available each weekday after Mass.

We plan to have two Christmas masses on Christmas Eve (4pm and 8pm) as well as two on Christmas Day (9.30am and 11.15am). There will be no congregational singing at these Masses, and this year, unfortunately, we can't host a Crib Service, for reasons which are not hard to imagine.

I promised to let you know this week how the Christmas booking system works. We shall maximise our numbers, whilst retaining the 2 metre rule, and we are giving plenty of notice of how the booking will happen. For fairness' sake, it won't be 'first come first served' and nothing will be finalised **until after 13th December**. Please tell us nothing **until after 3rd December**.

There will be three methods of booking, to suit different needs. One will be a Google poll, which will allow you to express your preferences in order in a way very helpful to us. Less easy for us, but easier for others, will be processing the details you send us, in the form we ask for them, by e-mail. You will receive the Google poll and the e-mail *pro forma* during the week. The third way is to give me a ring (01235 835038) sometime between 3rd and 13th December. I can then feed your details into our system.

Fr Andrew

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Advent Sunday
(Year B)
29th November 2020**

**Antiphons,
Prayers and
Readings**

With the season of Advent we begin the new Church Year. The Sunday Lectionary is as for Year B (The Year of Mark) and we use Year 1 for the Weekday Lectionary. The first week of Advent is also the first week of the Four-Week Psalter.

Entrance Antiphon

To you, I lift up, my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Ad te levavi

Cf Ps 24:1-3

Advent Wreath I

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our fathers: to you be praise and glory for ever. You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment. May we be obedient to your call and be ready and watchful to receive Christ your Son, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for you are our light and our salvation.

Collect

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever

First Reading

Isaiah 63:16, 17; 64:1, 3-8 (RSV)

For you, O Lord, are our Father,

our Redeemer from of old is thy name.

¹⁷ O LORD, why do you make us err from thy ways
and harden our heart, so that we fear you not?

Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage...

O that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence—.....

³ When you did terrible things which we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

⁴ From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you
who works for those who wait for him.

⁵ You meet him that joyfully works righteousness,
those that remember you in your ways.

Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

⁷ There is no one that calls upon your name,
that bestirs himself to take hold of you;
for you have hid your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquities.

⁸ Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

Psalm 80: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19 R/ 4

R/ O God, bring us back;

let your face shine on us, and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
enthroned on the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse up your might
and come to save us. **R/**

God of hosts, turn again, we implore;
look down from heaven and see.

Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. **R/**

May your hand be on the man at your right hand,
the son of man you have confirmed as your own.
And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name. **R/**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:3-9 (RSV)

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

Alleluia, **Alleluia**

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy: and give us your saving help. **Alleluia.**

Gospel

Mark 13:33-37(RSV)

Jesus said to his disciples: ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning— ³⁶ lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Watch.'

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below, gain for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(I De Adventu: De duobus adventibus Christi)

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 assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope. 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.


Communion Antiphon

Dominus dabit benignitatem

The Lord will bestow his bounty and our earth shall yield its increase.

Ps 84:13

or



Cantor (1st time)

Drop down ye heavens from above,

Full

and let the skies pour down righteousness.

Prayer after Communion

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold what to what endures. Through Christ our Lord.

Alma Redemptoris Mater

Mother of Christ, hear thou thy people's cry
Star of the deep and Portal of the sky!
Mother of Him who thee from nothing made.
Sinking, we strive and call to thee for aid.
Oh, by that joy which Gabriel brought to thee,
Thou Virgin first and last, let us thy mercy see.

Scripture Reading (for the First Week of Advent)

Monday	Isaiah 2:1-5	Matthew 8:5-11
Tuesday	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24
Wednesday	Isaiah 25:6-10	Matthew 15:29-37
Thursday	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 7:21, 24-27
Friday	Isaiah 29:17-24	Matthew 9:27-31
Saturday	Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26	Matthew 9:35-10:1, 6-8
Advent 2 B	Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11	Mark 1:1-8
	2 Peter 3:8-14	

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NOTICEBOARD

HOLY FATHER'S NOVEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that the progress of robotics and artificial intelligence may always serve humankind.

HOLY FATHER'S DECEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the World of God and a life of prayer.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 29th November - 5th December:

William Flanagan, Albert Castle, Teresa Brown, Christine Buck, Mary Wiley, Denis Buckley, Rebecca Smith, Thomas Champ.

THE YEAR OF THE WORD

Following the disruption caused by COVID-19, Bishop Philip has extended 'The Year of the Word' until 30th September 2021. In short, we shall continue with our intense Scripture programme till then. So far, we have had weekly 'The God who speaks' Bible Study (and I should like that to continue and become more extensive) and my own 'Food for the Journey' daily reflections, which began last March. Many people have been helped by the reflections, whether by regular or occasional study, or just the reassurance of being included in a mail-list. We are doing our very best in this parish to bring the Bible to the forefront of our lives.

CHILDREN CELEBRATE

Our Team have produced resources, which are available as booklets and kits at the back of St Mary's, to collect when the Church is open. See also the website www.hundredcatholicparish.org.uk and the link below.

Resources for Advent



CLG Advent Booklet
2020.pdf

See also: www.cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy
Children's liturgy general guidelines (doc, 59kb)

GIVING

To help with supplying the Didcot Foodbank, contact Veronica Paget: veronicapaget@hotmail.com or leave suitable food outside her front door. Jackymattam@btinternet.com helps with the poor locally. She writes: 'If anyone has recently donated to me and I haven't thanked you, because I have lost track, please accept our grateful thanks on behalf of those who will benefit. Does anyone have a microwave in a clean and working order?'

TO GIVE TO OUR PARISH BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR OCCASIONAL GIFT

BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary

Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183

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

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew is 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk



CAFOD World Gifts

This Christmas why not buy gifts that will change lives and bring happiness! CAFOD's World Gifts are a range of virtual gifts that transform the lives of those living in poverty overseas. New gifts this year included Keep Clean £6 (soap and washing powder for family) and Emergency Food £50 so please look on line at:

<https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

ADVENT

Next weekend the Advent Season Begins!

Join the Carmelites in Oxford and prepare your heart for Christmas with soul-enriching and Spirit-filled days of reflection.

There are two programmes on offer:

**Faith Search (Mondays) and
Keeping the Mystery (Saturdays)**

You can sign up for the one or for both if you wish

ADVENT - Saturday 10:00 to 12:00 UK Time

Faith Search - The Spirit of Carmel - [Learn More](#)

[Register for Faith Search](#)

ADVENT - Monday 20:00hrs to 21:00hrs UK time

Keeping the Mystery - The Spirit of Carmel - [Learn More](#)

[Register for Keeping the Mystery](#)

mary's
meals

a simple solution to world hunger

Donate

Give until 31 January 2021 and your donation will be doubled by the UK government, up to £2 million – meaning we can reach even more hungry children in Liberia with life-changing school meals.



We are so grateful to everyone who thinks of Mary's Meals at Christmas, but even more so this year. With one of our Christmas [gift cards](#), you can give the gift of hope and help children in some of the world's poorest countries to thrive.

And this year, our gift cards have twice the impact. Give until 31 January 2021 and your donation will be doubled by the UK government, up to £2 million – meaning we can reach even more hungry children in Liberia with life-changing school meals.

You can order [online](#) or by calling 0800 698 1212.



Buy a few Christmas dinners and help for the homeless:

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

emmaus OXFORD From 1st December, donations to their Christmas Challenge can be doubled through the Big Give. More details <https://emmaus.org.uk/oxford/>

The Divine Office

The People of God share in different ways in the daily recitation of the Divine Office. The Office of Readings (sometimes called 'Vigils' or 'Matins') used to be a night time provision. Nowadays it takes place early in the morning but may be scheduled for any convenient time of day. To this, religious add the minor hours of Terce (approx. 9am), Sext (approx. 12 noon), None (approx. 3pm), and Compline (late evening). Those not in religious communities are able to replace Terce, Sext, and None with a short Midday Office.

The major hours are Lauds (Morning Prayer) and Vespers (Evening Prayer), each climaxing with a Gospel Cantic, the Song of Zechariah (*Benedictus*) in the morning and the Song of Our Lady (*Magnificat*) in the evening. It is these major hours, which the Second Vatican Council called 'the hinges' (*cardines*) of the Divine Office and it is these major hours which the whole People of God are to share.

It is not an easy time to buy Office Books, which are all being revised. Stocks are low if not non-existent. Many people now make use of an app and read the Office on an iPad or iPhone. Google <https://universalis.com> for material and help with dealing it. There are some basic decisions: the version on the internet is free but uses its own translation to avoid problems of copyright; the version as an iPhone or android app costs about £10 (one-off single payment) and that allows one to use the proper texts. There are also options: to use Revised Standard Version (as we do in East Hendred); to listen to the Office read and sung &c.

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

30th November – 5th December 2020

Advent Week 1

St Andrew, Apostle

Monday 30th November

St Andrew was born at Bethsaida and worked as a fisherman. He is called the *Protokletos* ('the First Called') because, originally a disciple of St John the Baptist, he was the first to become a disciple of Jesus, bringing with him Simon Peter, his brother. After Pentecost he preached the Gospel and was crucified at Patras (Greece), hence becoming the patron of first the Greek and then the Byzantine Orthodox Church.

Collect for St Andrew's Day

WE HUMBLY implore your majesty, O Lord, that, just as the blessed Apostle Andrew was for your Church a preacher and pastor, so he may be for us a constant intercessor before you. 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

Romans 10:9-18

Faith comes from what is preached and what is preached comes from the Word of Christ.

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. ¹¹ The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to

shame.' ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. ¹³ For, 'every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'

¹⁴ But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!' ¹⁶ But they have not all heeded the gospel; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' ¹⁷ So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.

¹⁸ But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for

'Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.'

Reflection

TODAY'S First Reading is taken from a discussion by St Paul of whether Israelites, relying on the Jewish Law, can be saved. His view is that everyone – Jew and Gentile – needs only call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. The name of the Lord, for St Paul, is of course 'Jesus'. Separated from its context in that particular discussion, the passage is essentially about the apostolic commission to preach. This is the particular vocation of an apostle – amongst whom St Andrew was the *Protokletos* ('First Called'). St Andrew's greatness was that he effectively evangelised Simon Peter his brother. He didn't persuade him, as far as we know, but ushered him into Jesus' presence. This, for us, is a model of evangelism. It is a work of sowing and not of reaping. We broadcast the seeds which others cause to grow. The apostolic ministry is a matter of tradition: A hands on to B who hands on to C. And there is, if you like, a variable evangelistic 'R number'. So, instead of A handing on to B, we have A handing on to B and C, who hand it on to D, E, F, and G. This exponential growth explains the formidable success of the Early Church and the continuing success of the Church nowadays in various parts of the world.

Tuesday in the First Week of Advent

1st December

St Edmund Campion, Martyr

ST EDMUND CAMPION SJ (1540-1581) was captured at nearby Lyford Grange. Convicted of high treason, he was hung, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1886 and canonised in 1970 as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales.

Collect

ALMIGHTY and ever-living God, who gave your martyr Edmund Campion courage to witness to the Gospel of Christ, even to the giving of his life: grant that, by his prayers, we may endure all suffering for love of you, and may seek you with all our hearts, for you alone are the source of life. 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

Isaiah 11:1-10

The Peaceful Kingdom

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;

⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist,
and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

- ⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear shall feed;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
- ⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples;
him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.

Reflection

READING Isaiah is a traditional Advent task in many lectionaries. Some work their way through some of it in *lectio continua*, one chapter leading to another. Our weekday Mass lectionary stays with Isaiah until 16th December, after which we are in the direct lead-up to Christmas. Obviously, having 66 chapters, the book of the prophet Isaiah is too long to read in its entirety and the Mass lectionary unsurprisingly chooses 'purple passages', passages which speak particularly of the dawning of the Light, the coming of the longed-for Messiah. In chapter 11 we have a vision of the peaceful kingdom where, under the benign reign of the Messiah, creation is restored to harmony. The wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the calf, the lion and the fatling, all peacefully co-exist, and the lion makes do with straw, like the ox. In this paradisaical vision, the leader is a little child, and neither asp nor adder harm children. We notice the savage contrast provided today by the cruel execution of St Edmund Campion and we notice also, in passing, that the pouring out of the Spirit upon the Lord's Anointed is the substance of the prayer used at Confirmation, when the candidates receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Wednesday in the First Week of Advent

2nd December

Collect for Advent 1

GRANT your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom. 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

Isaiah 25:6-10

The Feast on the Holy Mountain

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. ⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'

¹⁰ For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be trodden down in his place, as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit.

Reflection

THE VISION of the day of the Lord and the feast on the Holy Mountain paints a picture starkly contrasting with the subsistence economy in which most people lived in the ancient world. Food was meagre and scarce and the vision of feasting, 'fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined', would be very enticing. As a sign of God's greatness, this feast is to be open to people of every nation – the veil having been pulled aside. The day of salvation and the overcoming of death marks the victory of the

Hebrew God over the Canaanite god of the underworld, Mot, whose Hebrew name means 'Death'. Overcoming death implies the triumph of fertility and, with it, bountiful harvest. It is in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 that St Paul takes the phrase 'He will swallow up death for ever' in verse 8 to mean the relevance of the Resurrection to human life. The phrase 'wipe away tears from all faces', also in verse 8, is also used in the Book of Revelation (7:17). Similarly, the feast on the Holy Mountain links us well to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, the final vision of Heaven in Revelation and the meal of which we receive a foretaste at Mass.

Thursday in the First Week of Advent

3rd December

St Francis Xavier

Collect for St Francis Xavier

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.

Reading

Isaiah 26:1-6

The Song of the Redeemed

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

'We have a strong city;
he sets up salvation
as walls and bulwarks.

² Open the gates,
that the righteous nation which keeps faith
may enter in.

³ You keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on you,

because he trusts in you.
4 Trust in the LORD for ever,
for the LORD GOD
is an everlasting rock.
5 For he has brought low
the inhabitants of the height,
the lofty city.
He lays it low, lays it low to the ground,
casts it to the dust.
6 The foot tramples it,
the feet of the poor,
the steps of the needy.'

Reflection

A STRONG biblical theme is the triumph of the weak over the strong. There are many examples: the story of Gideon (Judges 6-8), Sampson (Judges 13-16), David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17), and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Isaiah 50, 53). The same principle is at work in the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55) and indeed in the message of the Crucifixion, the saving work of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). In today's reading, the prophet is seeing victory for the redeemed, those who trust in the Lord. The walls and gates of Jerusalem, which have kept the enemy out, will securely enclose the faithful. The emphasis is on trust in the Lord: those whose minds are stayed on him will find peace.

Friday 4th December

Reading

Isaiah 29:17-24

The Day the eyes of the blind will see

17 Is it not yet a very little while
until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?
18 In that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book,
and out of their gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind shall see.
19 The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,
and the poor among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.
20 For the ruthless shall come to nought and the scoffer cease,

and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off,
²¹ who by a word make a man out to be an offender,
and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate,
and with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right.
²² Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the
house of Jacob:

'Jacob shall no more be ashamed,
no more shall his face grow pale.
²³ For when he sees his children,
the work of my hands, in his midst,
they will sanctify my name;
they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.
²⁴ And those who err in spirit will come to understanding,
and those who murmur will accept instruction.'

Reflection

WE ARE in a discussion about Jerusalem's judgment and salvation and we continue to focus on the Day of the Lord, a day when all will be transformed. The deaf will hear and the blind will see, and we are including here both spiritual deafness and spiritual blindness. The meek and the poor will find their joy in the Lord. Some of those who go astray will learn to improve their ways and some of the grumblers will learn to look at things differently. Evil-doers however will have no place. In this company of the redeemed, God's name shall be declared holy and his will shall be done. We are seeing here not only wholesale moral and spiritual improvement but an end to economic injustice and misery.

Saturday 5th December

Reading

Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26

God will be gracious when he hears your cry

O people in Zion who dwell at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when he hears it, he will answer you. ²⁰ And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself any more, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. ²¹ And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left... ²³ And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and grain, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your cattle will graze in large pastures; ²⁴ and the oxen and the asses that till the ground will eat salted provender, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. ²⁵ And upon every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. ²⁶ Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the LORD binds up the hurt of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.

Reflection

WE CONTINUE with the consideration of Jerusalem's future. What is needed is confidence in the Lord which will lead to a fertility previously unknown. Confidence requires obedience to the Lord's teaching, but such faithfulness brings great rewards. We are talking the language of apocalyptic: there is defeat for Jerusalem's enemies – 'the great slaughter' – and a great increase in the light. The moon will be as bright as the sun and the sun's light will increase sevenfold.
