

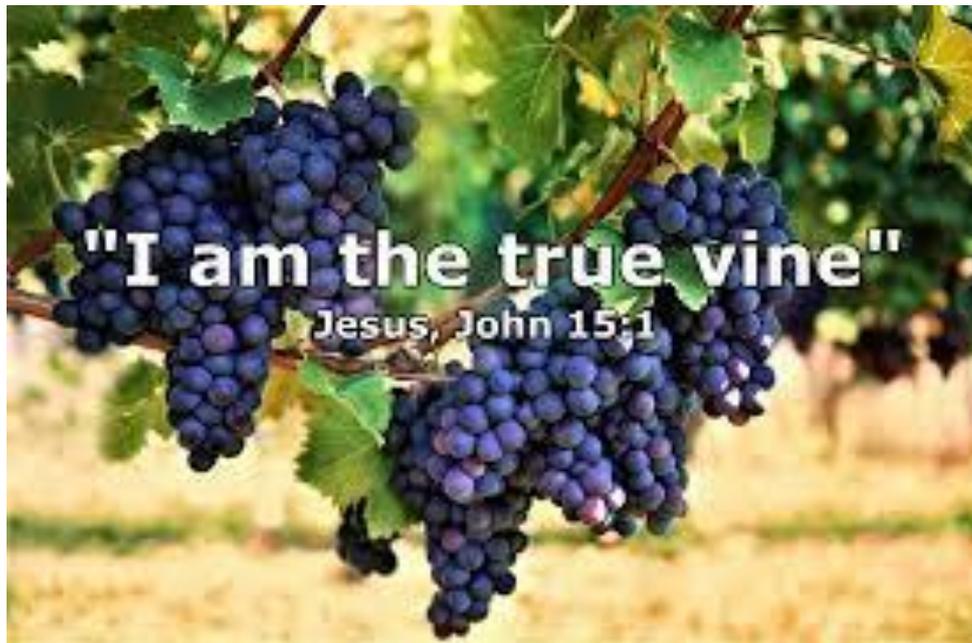
**DEANERY OF ST EDMUND CAMPION
ENGLISH MARTYRS—
VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE PASTORAL AREA**

www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish Fifth Week of Easter

2nd-8th May 2021



The May Magnificat

Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ
(1844–89)

MAY is Mary's month, and I
Muse at that and wonder why:
Her feasts follow reason,
Dated due to season—

Candlemas, Lady Day;
But the Lady Month, May,
Why fasten that upon her,
With a feasting in her honour?

Is it only its being brighter
Than the most are must delight
her?

Is it opportunist
And flowers finds soonest?

Ask of her, the mighty mother:
Her reply puts this other
Question: What is Spring?—
Growth in every thing—

Flesh and fleece, fur and feather,
Grass and greenworld all
together;
Star-eyed strawberry-breasted
Throstle above her nested

Cluster of bugle blue eggs thin
Forms and warms the life within;
And bird and blossom swell
In sod or sheath or shell.

All things rising, all things sizing
Mary sees, sympathising
With that world of good,
Nature's motherhood.

Their magnifying of each its kind
With delight calls to mind
How she did in her stored
Magnify the Lord.

Well but there was more than
this:
Spring's universal bliss
Much, had much to say
To offering Mary May.

When drop-of-blood-and-foam-
dapple
Bloom lights the orchard-apple
And thicket and thorp are merry
With silver-surfèd cherry

And azuring-over greybell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash
wet like lakes
And magic cuckoocall
Caps, clears, and clinches all—

This ecstasy all through
mothering earth
Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's
birth
To remember and exultation
In God who was her salvation.

FIFTH WEEK OF EASTER

2nd – 9th May 2021

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

please book for Sunday masses: hundred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Church is open from 9am until late afternoon

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| FIFTH SUNDAY IN EASTERTIDE | | | <i>[White]</i> |
| 2nd May | 9.30am | Parish Mass | <i>RIP Peter Frearson</i> |
| | 6pm | Holy Mass | <i>Pro populo</i> |
| Monday 3rd May | SS Philip & James, Apostles | | <i>[Red]</i> |
| | 9.15am | Holy Mass | <i>RIP Phil Smit</i> |
| Tuesday 4th May | English Martyrs | | <i>[Red]</i> |
| | 9.15am | Holy Mass | <i>English Martyrs, Didcot</i> |
| Wednesday 5th May | <i>in the Fifth Week of Easter</i> | | <i>[White]</i> |
| | 9.15am | Holy Mass | <i>RIP Alec Smith and Breda Smith</i> |
| Thursday 6th May | <i>Of St John the Apostle</i> | | <i>[White]</i> |
| | 9.15am | Holy Mass | |
| Friday 7th May | <i>in the Fifth Week of Easter</i> | | <i>[White]</i> |
| | 9.15am | Holy Mass | |
| Saturday 8th May | <i>in the Fifth Week of Easter</i> | | <i>[White]</i> |
| | No Mass | | |
| SIXTH SUNDAY IN EASTERTIDE | | | <i>[White]</i> |
| 9th May | 9.30am | Parish Mass | <i>Pro populo</i> |
| | 6pm | Holy Mass | |

CONTACT DETAILS

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

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

ASCENSION DAY 13th May 2021

Ascension Day, Thursday 13th May is Forty Days after Easter and, once again, a Holy Day of Obligation, as formerly. However the Obligation remains suspended. Mass on the day will be at 9.30am but, particularly for those who work, there will be a Vigil Mass the night before, (Wednesday 12th May) at 6pm.

CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 25th April, there were 305 hits from 114 machines, with 113-remaining on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 75 viewers were from the UK, 24 from Ireland, and 15 from the rest of the world.

BOOKING FOR MASS AT ST MARY'S

Please book for 9.30am and 6pm Sunday Masses before 12 noon on Fridays hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk On Saturday contact Fr Andrew on aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk Space limited. Book early. Masks and social distancing required.

PENTECOST 23rd May 2021

On the Feast of Pentecost, there will be an extra Mass –11.15am at St Mary's. We hope very much that people who have felt unable to return to Church, will feel able to come to one of the three masses that Sunday. More details soon.

CHILDREN'S PAGES

- (1) Have you tuned into '**Morning Prayer for Children**', 9am on Sundays? It's ten minutes on Church Services TV.
- (2) **Special stuff for Sunday** 2nd May, Fifth Sunday of Easter, follows on the next couple of pages.

ST AMAND'S AT MASS

One class at a time will come down to Mass on some Thursdays. The first occasion is 6th May at 9.15am. On Ascension Day, they will not come down, but join in the livestream.

ROSARY

The Pope is asking us to join worldwide in the saying of the Rosary each day in May. He will lead the Rosary each day at 6pm (Rome Time), 5pm here. We shall say a daily decade after Mass. The intention is for the ending of the plague and for those who are suffering or caring for the sick. There is a note on the Rosary immediately following the Children's Pages below.

YEAR B

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Sunday 2nd May 2021

I am the True Vine

John 15:1-8

Jesus told his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my father is the gardener who tends the vine. Any of my branches that don't bear fruit are cut away, and the branches which bear fruit are pruned by him so that the following year they will produce even more.

Because you have listened to and understood my message, you will bear much fruit. A branch that is cut off the vine will wither and die without producing any fruit. If you stay close to me and carry my words in your heart, then you will bear much fruit and truly be my disciple".

Reflection

A gardener's job is to make sure the plants they tend are healthy and strong. One way they can do this is by pruning. This means cutting back the dead, damaged or weak stems of a plant. This encourages new growth by making the buds and shoots grow strong and healthy. Good pruning produces a strong framework of branches but also encourages good fruit production for many years. The good gardener with careful pruning will keep his plants healthy and every year they will produce more fruit.

Jesus used the story of the vine and branches to explain that we are all part of him. It is through Jesus that we have life, and through the work of his father that we flourish and grow strong. He prunes away the things in our life that makes us weak or stops us from growing in faith and love.

Jesus is working and living in our lives, in our thoughts, our actions and our words. By being kind, loving, ready to forgive and honest, the fruits of his love are there for all to see.

Closing Prayer

Lord, fill us with your life and love so that we will produce much fruit

and a rich harvest for your sake.

Amen



Speak, Lord



Acts 9:26-31
Psalm 21
1 John 3:18-24
John 15:1-8

SUNDAY LITURGY FOR CHILDREN

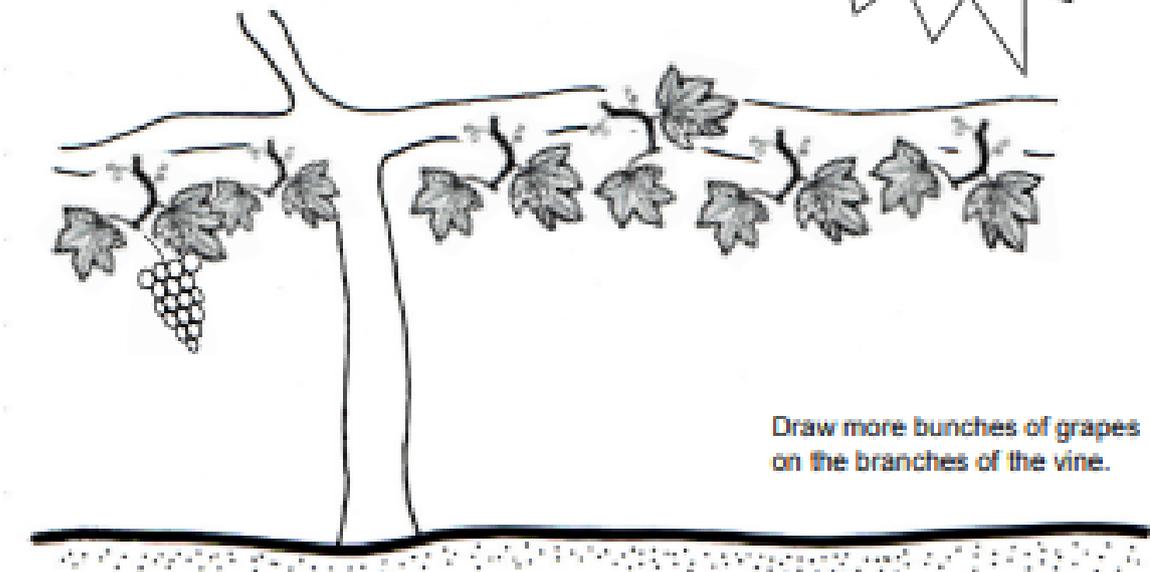
Year B — 5th Sunday of Easter



Jesus said:

**"I AM THE TRUE
VINE
YOU ARE THE BRANCHES"**

A vine is a tree
that produces
g



Draw more bunches of grapes
on the branches of the vine.

I can be a
good branch
and produce
good fruit
by ...

Draw or write
about some
good fruit you
"produce".

The Rosary

The Rosary has five sets of ten beads each preceded by a separate bead. The Our Father is said on the separate bead, a Hail Mary on each of the ten beads, and a Glory be... whilst holding the chain before proceeding to the next separate bead. It is customary to begin, on the short chain, with the Creed (holding the crucifix), an Our Father, three Hail Marys and a Glory be... At the end of the chaplet (set of five mysteries), hold the medal and say the Hail Holy Queen....

The Five Joyful Mysteries (Monday and Saturday)

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | The Annunciation | <i>Luke 1:26-38</i> |
| 2 | The Visitation | <i>Luke 1:39-46</i> |
| 3 | The Nativity | <i>Luke 2:1-7</i> |
| 4 | The Presentation | <i>Luke 2:22-32</i> |
| 5 | The Finding in the Temple | <i>Luke 2:42-52</i> |

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesday and Friday)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | The Agony in the Garden | <i>Mark 14:32-38</i> |
| 2 | The Scourging at the Pillar | <i>John 18:33 – 19:1</i> |
| 3 | The Crowning with Thorns | <i>Mark 15:16-20</i> |
| 4 | The Carrying of the Cross | <i>Matthew 27:31-34</i> |
| 5 | The Crucifixion | <i>Luke 23:33-48</i> |

The Five Luminous Mysteries (Thursday)

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | The Baptism in the Jordan | <i>Matthew 3:13-17</i> |
| 2 | The Wedding at Cana | <i>John 2:1-12</i> |
| 3 | The Proclamation of the Kingdom | <i>Luke 4:14-21</i> |
| 4 | The Transfiguration | <i>Mark 9:2-8</i> |
| 5 | The Institution of the Eucharist | <i>1 Corinthians 11:23-26</i> |

The Five Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday and Sunday)

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | The Resurrection | <i>Luke 24:1-6</i> |
| 2 | The Ascension | <i>Luke 24:50-53</i> |
| 3 | The Gift of the Holy Spirit | <i>Acts 2:1-4</i> |
| 4 | The Assumption of Our Lady | <i>1 Corinthians 15:20-26</i> |
| 5 | The Coronation of Our Lady and the Glory of the Saints | <i>Revelation 12:1-6</i> |

HAIL HOLY QUEEN, Mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we lift up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

CHARITY

LOCAL

Didcot

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

Wantage

Jackymattam@btinternet.com helps with the poor locally. Contact her about what practical help she needs. It is usually children's clothes, push chairs &c.

Annie@thehilltribe.com is collecting scarves (for headcovering), socks for men, women, and children, and suitcases to take all this to Afghanistan.

MISSIO

Missio Red Boxes. In 2020 our community of East Hendred and East Ilsley raised £1470.83 through the Red boxes and donations to *Missio*. As it is difficult to collect your red boxes, could you please empty them and send a cheque to me at Toad Hall, Stream Road, Upton, OX11 9JD, made out to Missio-Mill hill? Alternatively you could do a bank transfer: missio.org.uk/redbox. Thank you. Margaret Maytham.

GIVING: 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

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

Parish Administrators

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

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

HOLY FATHER'S MAY PRAYER INTENTION

Let us pray that those in charge of finance will work with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its dangers.

FIRST COMMUNION GROUPS

Pray for children who have just begun First Communion Preparation through St Amand's School: Felicity, Keeleigh, Elijah, Anna, Eamonn, Luca, Mia, Isobel, Julia, Stephen, Thomas. Pray also for George and Toby at Hendreds Primary School, undertaking preparation with Mary Harrison.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 2nd-8th May: Lilian Smith, Peter Frearson, James Caven, John Lineham, Kathleen Eunice Wells, Nicholas Hasdisty, Edith Elsley, Alex Smith, Sybil Hudson, Margaret Mulford, Rosino Vettraino.

CARMELITE CONFERENCES

Scripture and Spirituality Conferences are run from Carmelite Friary on Boar's Hill (which has been local to us and will be again once we get beyond the Zoom-only stage).

Key dates at present are 10th-11th July for a Conference on St John of the Cross and 7pm on 11th July for an event called 'Teresa's Four Waters in Word, Image, and Song'.

Booking for these events by 15th May attracts a 10% discount for those who quote the reference SSC10.

For further details, contact: ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish



Fifth Sunday of

Easter (B)

2nd May 2021

Antiphons,

Prayers and

Readings

Entrance Antiphon

Cantate Domino (Ps 98:1-2)

O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia. *Ps* His right hand and his holy arm: have brought salvation.

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal. 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

Acts 9:26-31(RSV)

When Saul had come to Jerusalem he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, ²⁹ preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists; but they were seeking to kill him. ³⁰ And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Caesare'a, and sent him off to Tarsus. ³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samar'ia had peace and was built up; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied.

Alleluiatic Psalm

Ps 22:26-28, 30-32 R/26

R/ Alleluia!

My vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.
They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him.
May their hearts live on for ever and ever! **R/**

All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord,
all families of the nations worship before him,
They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust. **R/**

And my soul shall live for him.
My descendants shall serve him.
They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come,
They shall declare his saving justice to peoples
yet unborn:
'These are the things the Lord has done. **R/**

Second Reading

1 John 3:18-24 (RSV)

Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.
¹⁹ By this we shall know that we are of the truth, and reassure our hearts
before him ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our
hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn
us, we have confidence before God; ²² and we receive from him whatever
we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.
²³ And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his
Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ All
who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this we
know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.

Gospel Acclamation

R/ Alleluia, alleluia.
Jesus said: 'I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life:
No one can come to the Father except through me.
R/ Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 15:1-8 (RSV)

Jesus said to his disciples 'I AM the true vine, and my Father is the
vinedresser. ² Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and
every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
³ You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you.
⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless
it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I AM the
vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that
bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If a man does

Scripture Reading (Easter Week 5)

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Monday | Acts 14:5-18 | John 14:21-26 |
| Tuesday | Acts 14:19-28 | John 14:27-31 |
| Wednesday | Acts 15:1-6 | John 15:1-8 |
| Thursday | Acts 15:7-21 | John 15:9-11 |
| Friday | Acts 15:22-31 | John 15:12-17 |
| Saturday | Acts 16:1-10 | John 15:18-21 |

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (B)

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

1 John 4:7-10

John 15:9-17

Ant.
6.
R



E-gí-na cæli * læ-tá-re, alle-lú-ia: Qui- a
quem me-ru- ísti portá-re, alle-lú-ia: Re-surréx-it,
si-cut dix-it, alle- lú-ia: Ora pro no-bis De- um,
alle-lú- ia.

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluia.
he whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia.
as he promised hath arisen, alleluia.
pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluia.

V/ Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia:
R/ for the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

3rd – 7th May 2021

SS Philip & James, Apostles

Monday 3rd May 2021

Collect

O God, who gladden us each year with the feast day of the Apostles Philip and James: grant us, through their prayers, a share in the Passion and Resurrection of your Only-Begotten Son, so that we may merit to behold you for eternity. 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. Amen.

Reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (RSV)

The Resurrection of Christ

15 Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, ²by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Reflection

The Apostolic Faith

TODAY we celebrate together a pair of apostles who are commemorated together only because their relics were brought to Rome at the same time. In St John's Gospel we learn that St Philip is from Bethsaida, as were Peter and Andrew, and we learn that Philip introduced Nathaniel – whom the other Gospels call 'Bartholomew' – to Jesus (John 1:41) and most of what we know about Philip we find out in the Fourth Gospel. It is Philip who asks Jesus how to feed the 5,000. Later, Philip's Greek name makes him a natural link for the Greeks who come to the Jerusalem Passover celebrations (John 12:20-22). At the Last Supper Philip asked Jesus to show the disciples the Father, which leads to Jesus explaining the unity of the Father and the Son. He goes on to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor and is thought to have been martyred in what is now called Turkey.

St James, referred to as 'the brother of the Lord', is also known as James the Less, and St James the Just. We should be aware that those called 'brothers' in Aramaic were often cousins, and this fits with what we believe about Jesus, that he was born of a virgin who had no other children. It also fits with James being called 'son of Alphæus'. James was not one of the Twelve but was leader of the Church in Jerusalem for about thirty years, until his martyrdom. The Church in Jerusalem was conservative and we read in the Acts of the Apostles of the fierce debate (Acts 15) and hear some of the fall-out in the argument between Peter and Paul (Galatians.2:11-21), where Peter had been of one mind with James.

On this feast St Paul gives us what was already an established Creed of the Palestinian Christian community. As such it gives us the earliest summary of the apostolic faith, the message which the apostles set out to preach to the whole world. The credal formula has two parts: first, that Christ died and was raised from the dead; second, that this dying and being raised was 'for our sins' and 'on the third day'. But there are four acts altogether: Christ died, he was buried, he was raised from the dead, and he appeared to his disciples. This appearing to his disciples included Peter and the Twelve (Matthias being now counted as number 12, presumably), then to 500 disciples, then to St James the Less, then to all the apostles – clearly more than the Twelve are counted in this category – and finally to St Paul, the famous vision of the Risen and Glorified Christ on the Damascus Road.

English Martyrs

Tuesday 4th May

Collect

Almighty God, who in our country raised up martyrs from every walk of life to vindicate the authority of your Church in teaching and worship: grant through their intercession, we pray, that all our people may be gathered once again to celebrate the same sacraments under the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading

Matthew 10:17-20 (RSV)

Dragged before governors and kings

¹⁷ Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹ When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; ²⁰ for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Reflection

The English Martyrs

Many men and women – priests and laity - were martyred in England and Wales in the period 1535-1680 and have subsequently been recognised by the Church as saints. At the same time, many Christians from the Reformed tradition also lost their lives during these tempestuous times. Most martyrs were put to death for refusing to compromise their beliefs. A particular relevance of this feast for us in East Hendred is that this part of Oxfordshire – then Berkshire – was a centre of recusancy, an area where there were many Catholics, openly and secretly, and a place of particular risk, where priests were hidden in priest holes and mass was said secretly. We think particularly of Hendred House, the chapel of which has been here since the thirteenth century, and where, in penal times there was much covert activity. For a time the chapel had to be disguised as a log shed.

Persecution of Christians seemed for a time last century to dwindle but in fact it has been estimated that more people lost their lives for their Christian belief in that century than in the previous 1900 years. In parts of the world this persecution continues and, even in the liberal democracies of the West, we now face considerable opposition. It would be overdramatic, perhaps, to call this opposition 'persecution', but it is not an easy time to confess and practise the Catholic Faith.

Today we remember – and offer our prayers and support to – the neighbouring parish of English Martyrs, Didcot, on their feast of title. We also pray for our Anglican brothers and sisters. When the Church of England revised its Calendar, it included a feast 'Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Era' in which were specifically mentioned those on the different sides of the religious divide who suffered for their beliefs. That said, we continue to pray, as today's Collect puts it 'that all our people may be gathered once again to celebrate the same sacraments under the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ'. Moreover, we do not begin to underestimate the heroism and suffering of the Catholic martyrs and we seek their prayers.

Wednesday in the Fifth Week of Easter

5th May

Collect

O God, restorer and lover of innocence: direct the hearts of your servants towards yourself, that those you have set free from the darkness of unbelief may never stray from the light of your truth. 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. Amen.

Reading

John 15:1-8 (RSV)

Jesus the True Vine

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to

you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.'

Reflection

The True Vine

We readily respond to the metaphor of the Vine. It's a very simple image. Jesus is like the tree itself – the vine – and we, his followers, are the branches. Branches which do not flourish are pruned away, allowing for fresh growth. The Father is the Vinedresser. The imagery is very much rooted – to use a suitable metaphor – in the Old Testament, where Israel is seen as the Lord's vineyard (Isaiah 5; Jeremiah 12) or as a 'choice vine' (Jeremiah 2), a 'luxuriant vine' (Hosea 10). We may worry about the idea of being 'pruned away': am I bearing fruit, am I productive? This worry often translates into worry about everyday living. Am I a good friend, parent, spouse, teacher? Apparently many people worry about Imposter Syndrome – feeling as though they are not really up to doing whatever it is they are supposed to do. Self-worth is not something most of us are very good at.

I suggest that the more important thing in this passage to reflect on and take to heart is the word 'abide'. I looked up the meaning of 'abide' on the internet. I'm told that it has a particular biblical meaning – and certainly we did come across it a little while ago a couple of times in the story of the Road to Emmaus ('Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.' Luke 24:29). The definition I found was that 'to abide' is 'to remain stable or fixed in a state', 'to continue in a place'. Nowhere is this stronger than in the last verse of Psalm 23, abiding in the House of the Lord. The longing to be in the Lord's Temple – a longing of which have a heightened awareness at present – is there in Psalm 84 as well as in today's Psalm, 122. But we mustn't get stuck on the idea of the Lord's House – except, of course, that it is the place where Christ in his sacramental

Presence lastingly abides. The Risen Christ, as we discover in the New Testament, over and over again, is God's New Temple, into which we are built as Living Stones. 'And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb' (Rev 21:22). It is certainly helpful that we have a number of different metaphors for living *in Christo*, in Christ. We are members of his Body. He is the Temple of which we are part. He is the True Vine, of which we are branches. He encourages us 'to bear much fruit, and so prove to be [his] disciples.'

Thursday in the Fifth Week of Easter

6th May

O God, by whose grace, though sinners, we are made just and, though pitiable, made blessed: stand, we pray, by your works, stand by your gifts, that those justified by faith may not lack the courage of perseverance. 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. Amen.

Reading

John 15:9-11(RSV)

Abide in my love

Jesus said to his disciples: ⁹ 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.'

Reflection

THE GOSPEL yesterday was about Jesus the True Vine and the importance of 'abiding' in his love. In fact, 'abiding' in the love of Jesus is the main point the image of the Vine is conveying. The fruits of this 'abiding', like the fruits of the Vine, are entirely dependent on the branches of the Vine being well-maintained and properly attached to the trunk of the tree. The way to 'abide' in the love of Jesus is keep his commandments and we shall be considering that further in tomorrow's Gospel.

Friday in the Fifth Week of Easter

7th May

Collect

GRANT us, Lord, we pray, that, being rightly conformed to the paschal mysteries, what we celebrate in joy may protect and save us with perpetual power. 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. Amen.

Reading

John 15:12-17 (RSV)

Love one another as I have loved you

Jesus said to his disciples: ¹² 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ This I command you, to love one another.

Reflection

No longer Servants but Friends

IN THE Gospel, we begin and end with the command to love one another, and, as the opening verse makes clear, the love which the disciples must show is the love with which Jesus has loved them. This is a theme addressed further in 1 John 4:10-11. 'In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.'

The love of God, shown by Jesus, is a radical love, in which he lays down his life for his friends. This laying down of life is not only an expiation – a cleansing – but an atonement, establishing an entirely new relationship between God and humankind. We become 'friends' (*philoï*) and not 'slaves'

(douloi). We enter freely into a loving relationship with God not because we choose to but because he chose us. This sounds soft and comfy, or even elitist and privileged, until we realise that our calling is to 'go and bear fruit'. As we know, for a chosen few, throughout history, bearing fruit has entailed sharing in the laying down of life in faithful witness. For everyone else, the call is for lasting fruit that 'should abide'. There's that word 'abide' again that we met a couple of days ago. Called to bear lasting fruit, we are called into a lasting relationship of fruitful love with God and with one another.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS-

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MARK,

Chapter by Chapter

This week we continue with Chapter 13.

Mark 13 *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

13 And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!' **2** And Jesus said to him, 'Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down.'

3 And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, **4** 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign when these things are all to be accomplished?' **5** And Jesus began to say to them, 'Take heed that no one leads you astray. **6** Many will come in my name, saying, "I am he!" and they will lead many astray. **7** And when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is not yet. **8** For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines; this is but the beginning of the sufferings.

Persecution Foretold

9 'But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them. **10** And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. **11** And when they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. **12** And brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and

have them put to death; ¹³ and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

The Desolating Sacrilege

¹⁴ 'But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; ¹⁵ let him who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything away; ¹⁶ and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. ¹⁷ And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! ¹⁸ Pray that it may not happen in winter. ¹⁹ For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be. ²⁰ And if the Lord had not shortened the days, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. ²¹ And then if any one says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "Look, there he is!" do not believe it. ²² False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. ²³ But take heed; I have told you all things beforehand.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴ '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.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

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.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³² 'But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 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.'

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