

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

Third Week of Lent

7th- 14th March 2021



The Ten Commandments

Reflection – *The Temple*

THE CLEANSING of the Temple in St John's Gospel happens in chapter two, so, early in Jesus' ministry. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the incident happens in Holy Week, so, late in Jesus' ministry. John's Gospel offers quite a bit of historical detail which is not in the other Gospels, and that leaves us with a question. Are there two 'Cleansing of the Temple' incidents, one at the outset of Jesus' ministry, the other in his final week, or is there just the one, placed differently in the different Gospels to make particular theological points? The best approach to John's Gospel is not to focus on the differences, but to look at it in its own right, learning from both its story details and its teaching.

One reading of John's Gospel sees the Temple as the fundamental image. By siting everything in Jerusalem, round the Passover and other Jewish feasts, we see the cleansing of the Temple, which is what eventually got Jesus into the final conflict with the authorities in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in the background throughout. Jesus in John is in controversy over the Temple in Chapter 2: it is he and not this 46-year-old building which is God's Temple. Destroy the Temple and in three days it will be raised up again. Not the building but the Temple of his Body. We now see that in the first chapter Christ is the Ark of God, the Lamp, and the Altar, with angels descending and ascending. In Chapter 2 he is the true Temple. In Chapter 3 we encounter the laver, the ceremonial washing which in the encounter with Nicodemus foreshadows Baptism. Then in Chapter 7 we have the showbread, the teaching about Christ the Bread of Life in the Eucharist. Then he is the Light in the Temple, the *hanukkiyah*, in Chapters 8 and 9. Eventually he passes through the curtain of the Temple in Chapter 17 with the High Priestly Prayer as the offering of incense. After his sacrificial death – the slaughter of the Passover Lamb - we encounter the tomb which has become the Holy of Holies of the New Temple. His Body is not there but where it had lain there are two angels in white. Christ is the High Priest (Hebrews 9) and he is the Temple.

Fr Andrew

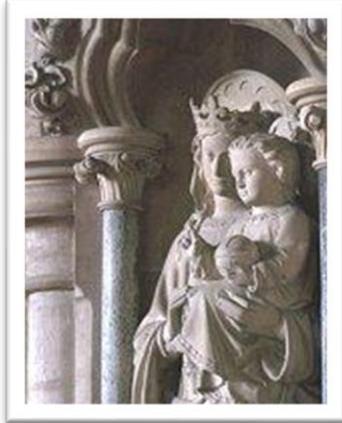
7th – 14th March 2021

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

Church open from 9am to late afternoon each day

Sunday 7th March	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (Year B) [Purple] 9.30am Mass [please book] RIP Breda and Alex Smith 6pm Mass [please book] Pro populo Exodus 20:1-17 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 John 2:13-25
Monday 8th March	<i>Of the Third Week of Lent</i> [Purple] 9.15am Mass <i>Peace in Syria and Afghanistan</i> <i>(Slawek Gawlik)</i> 2 Kings 5:1-15 Luke 4:24-30
Tuesday 9th March	<i>Of the Third Week of Lent</i> [Purple] <u>No Mass</u>
Wednesday 10th March	<i>Of the Third Week of Lent</i> [Purple] <u>12 noon</u> Funeral Mass for John Michael von Pflügl
Thursday 11th March	<i>Of the Third Week of Lent</i> [Purple] 10am School Mass* <i>RIP Patrick Rush</i> Jeremiah 7:23-28 Luke 11:14-23
Friday 12th March	<i>Of the Third Week of Lent</i> [Purple] 9.15am Mass <i>RIP Francis Fanthome</i> Hosea 14:2-10 Mark 12:28-34
Saturday 13th March	<i>Of the Third Week of Lent</i> [Purple] No Mass
Sunday 14th March	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Year B) [Purple] 9.30am Mass [please book] Pro populo 6pm Mass [please book] <i>RIP Arthur Langley</i> 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23 Ephesians 2:4-10 John 3:14-21

* Different readings are normally used for the School Mass.



EAST HENDRED CATHOLIC PARISH

Lent 2021

Sundays in Lent

- 9am Morning Prayer for Children (CSTV)
- 9.30am Parish Mass (CSTV)**
<https://www.churchservices.tv/easthendred>
- 6pm Holy Mass (CSTV)**
<https://www.churchservices.tv/easthendred>

Mondays in Lent

- 9.15am Holy Mass (CSTV)**
followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
I: The Agony in the Garden
- 6pm Vespers (Facebook)
- 7.30pm Lenten Retreat: 'Finding Hope in Scripture' with Sr Hyacinthe OP
www.godwhospeaks.uk > **[finding-hope-in-scripture](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/finding-hope-in-scripture)**

Tuesdays in Lent

- 9.15am Holy Mass (CSTV)**
followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
II: The Scourging at the Pillar
- 6pm Vespers (Facebook)
- 7.30pm 'The God Who Speaks' (Zoom)
(2nd March 'Gathered Together in Christ')
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4315430307?pwd=cDloZzNnRzM4SUtUM2RsbFZmZ0FRdz09;>

Wednesdays in Lent 9.15am Holy Mass (CSTV)

*followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
III: The Crowning with Thorns*

1.30pm Bible Stories for School (Teams)
link provided to parents by St Amand's School

6pm Vespers (Facebook)

Thursdays in Lent

9am Morning Prayer &
Exposition until:

9.55am Benediction (CSTV)

10am School Mass (CSTV)

*followed by Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
IV: The Carrying of the Cross*

6pm Vespers (Facebook)

7.30pm 'Verso L'Alto' with Bishop Philip

<https://www.portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk/live-mass.php>

Fridays in Lent 9am Morning Prayer (CSTV)

9.15am Holy Mass (CSTV)

followed by Rosary V: The Crucifixion

5pm Ecumenical Evensong at Holy
Trinity Parish Church, Ardington
(open to the public)

(Facebook: Benefice of Wantage Downs)

<https://m.facebook.com/pages/category/Church/Benefice-of-Wantage-Downs-109686177340271/>

Confessions: *after Mass (once church re-opens for public worship) or
by arrangement*

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

BOOKING FOR MASS

Demand means that it is helpful for those who book electronically to book each week and not to request a repeat arrangement. Those who cannot book electronically are offered the facility of a repeat arrangement on condition that they let us know in good time if they are planning not to come on any particular occasion.

ST MARY'S OPENING

We are open from 9am most days until late afternoon. Come along to Mass on weekdays. . Masks and social distancing required. Book for Mass on Sundays. E-mail hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk before 12 noon on Fridays. After that, contact Fr Andrew on 01235 835038 or aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk Space limited. Book early.

ST MARY'S ON LIVE-STREAM

Last Sunday (28th February) 297 people looked in from 145 addresses, with 113 staying long enough to take part in the Mass. Homes with more than one viewer and those browsing explain the largest figure. 116 were from the UK, 18 from Ireland, 10 from elsewhere.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

Two sessions in Lent in support of this year's theme: Monday's Lent Retreat (see below) and the Tuesday Bible Study (details on the Lent programme).

VERSO L'ALTO-REACH THE HEIGHTS! An Hour of Prayer and Praise

Bishop Philip invites you to join him and the Cathedral clergy online every Thursday 7.30 to 8.30 pm during lockdown to pray for safety, for the sick and for key workers, for the Diocese and for a speedy end to the pandemic. <https://www.portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk/live-mass.php>

LENTEN RETREAT: 'FINDING HOPE IN SCRIPTURE'

Sr Hyacinthe Defos du Rau, OP, Formation for Mission Team Leader
Department for Evangelisation, Tel: 0150681874, writes:

Every Monday evening during Lent, for six weeks, at 7.30pm we will discover aspects of the virtue of hope from six different Bible passages. Our reflection will be followed by a time of live-streamed adoration and Compline with the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph. Register here to participate:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtc-2grjkiGtU8vPFJea2ktvR5U0MZ1mrL>

CAFOD Lent Appeal. Abdella lives in an extremely remote and mountainous part of Ethiopia. It takes him ten hours a day to collect water. He says his life is being wasted as he has no time for anything else. Give today to reach vulnerable communities around the world with water and to provide other vital support. Donate online at cafod.org.uk/lent or phone 0303 303 3030 or by using a CAFOD envelope. You can also give via text. Text LENT 5 to 70460 to donate £5 or Text LENT 10 to 70460 to donate £10* or LENT 20 to 70460 to donate £20 .Many thanks for your support.

*Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message you'll be opting in to hear more about CAFOD's work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £10 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text LENTNOINFO to 70460.

Here is the link to a short film about Abdella that could be shown at livestream masses and on face book. Abdella film 2minutes 32 Thirds [Lent Appeal 2021: Abdella's walk for water | CAFOD on Vimeo](#)

LOCAL CHARITY

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 and items for her may be left outside the door of Cozens Farm inside plastic bags. She is looking for children's clothes (toddlers and young children).

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION

Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Kristina, 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

John Michael von Pflügl, Barbara Burnham
Week 7th-13th March: Thomas Mulford, Breda Smith, Jo Barr, Margaret Brown, John Curley, Julia Swanson, Mary Teresa Eyston, John Colfer, Brendan O'Neill, William George Mooney, Mary Dainty, Thomas Patrick Rivers.

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

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Administrators

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

CHILDREN'S PAGES

- (1) Watch out for '**Morning Prayer for Children**', 9am on Sundays, for ten minutes on Church Services TV. Nobody will mind if you're still eating your cornflakes or wearing your jim-jams. The theme is from today's Gospel at Mass (Jesus and the Moneychangers in the Temple)
- (2) How about writing your **Lent prayer or promise** on a third of an A4 sheet? You could then send the image in to us at hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk? We should then send it on to Libby Holderness who will print it out and make a paper chain of the promises to display at church. There it will be (cue: fanfare) very soon.
- (3) We have got some small **wooden craft crosses** which we shall leave in St Mary's porch for children to collect and decorate. They will help us celebrate 'Passiontide', the second half of Lent, when our thoughts move towards the events of Holy Week.
- (4) **Special stuff for Sunday** 7th March, the Third Sunday in Lent follows on the next couple of pages.

Enjoy

Fr Andrew

YEAR B

Third Sunday of Lent

Sunday 7th March 2021

Anger in the Temple

John 2:13-22

Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He found the temple full of people selling animals, and among them sat the money changers. He was incredibly angry and overturned the table scattering coins everywhere. He chased the animals and the merchants out of the temple shouting at them, 'Take all of these things away and stop making my father's house into a marketplace!' The temple priests tried to stop Jesus and asked, 'What right do you have to act like this?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.'

'This temple took forty-six years to build! How could you rebuild it in three days?' they exclaimed.

The temple which Jesus spoke of was his own body, and after his resurrection from the dead, his disciples would understand what Jesus had said that day.

Reflection

Why do you think the money changers and the animals were in the temple?

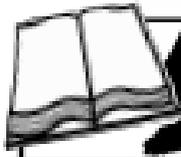
The animals were sold as sacrifices. Ordinary money with pictures of Caesar on could not be used, so had to be changed to special temple coins, used to buy the animals and pay temple taxes.

Why was Jesus angry?

When Jesus was talking about rebuilding the temple, he was not talking about the physical building, but his own body being raised to life three days after dying on the cross.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray for the family which has gathered here in God's house to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection. Amen



Exodus 20:1-17
 Psalm 18
 1 Corinthians 1:22-25
 John 2:13-25

Speak, Lord



SUNDAY LITURGY FOR CHILDREN
 Year B — 3rd Sunday of Lent



In JERUSALEM ...
 Jesus got **ANGRY**

People were not
RESPECTING
 the **T** _ _ _ _ **E**



Draw Jesus' face as he was angry with the sellers in the Temple.

Then He said:

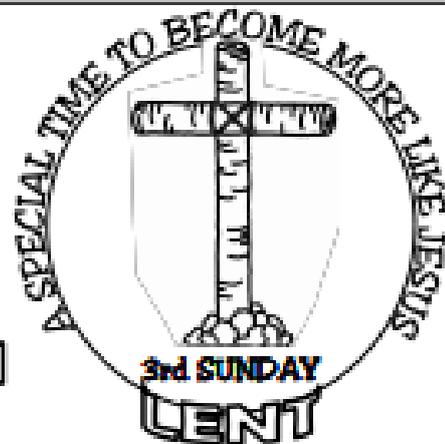
"WHEN I DIE I WILL

7 5 2 8 4 1 9 6 3

Put the numbered letters in order to find out what Jesus said.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
G	S	N	A	I	I	R	E	A

TODAY is the
THIRD
 SUNDAY
 of **LENT**



East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Third Sunday in
Lent (B)
7th March 2021
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Oculi mei semper

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare.
Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor. *Ps 25*

Collect

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. 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

Exodus 20:1-17(RSV)

In those days: God spoke all these words, saying,

² 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ 'You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ 'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

⁸ 'Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your

God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; ¹¹ for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

¹² 'Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

¹³ 'You shall not kill.

¹⁴ 'You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ 'You shall not steal.

¹⁶ 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

¹⁷ 'You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbour's.'

Psalm 19:8-11 R/ Jn 6:69

R/ You have the message of eternal life, O Lord.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The decrees of the Lord are steadfast,
they give wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is pure,
abiding for ever.

The judgments of the Lord are true;
they are, all of them, just.

May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favour in your sight,
My rock and my redeemer!

Third Reading

1 Corinthians 1:22-25 (RSV)

Brethren: Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Gospel

John 2:13-25 (RSV)

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business. ¹⁵And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade.' ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for thy house will consume me.' ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, 'What sign have you to show us for doing this?' ¹⁹Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' ²⁰The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' ²¹But he spoke of the temple of his body. ²²When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. ²³Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did; ²⁴but Jesus did not trust himself to them, ²⁵because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man.

Apostles' Creed

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbour. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(De spiritali significatione Quadragesimæ)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For by your gracious gift each year your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure, so that, more eagerly intent on prayer and on the works of charity, and participating in the mysteries by which they have been reborn, they may be led to the fullness of grace that you bestow on your sons and daughters. 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.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

after St Alphonsus Liguori (18th cent.)

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

+ + + + +

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

Communion Antiphon

Qui biberit aquam

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life. *Jn 4:13-14*

Prayer after Communion

As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading (Lent Week 3)

Monday	2 Kings 5:1-15	Luke 4:24-30
Tuesday	Daniel 3:25, 34-43	Matthew 18:21-35
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9	Matthew 5:17-19
Thursday	Jeremiah 7:23-28	Luke 11:14-23
Friday	Hosea 14:2-10	Mark 12:28-34
Saturday	Hosea 5:15 – 6:6	Luke 18:9-14

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT (B)

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

Ephesians 2:4-10

John 3:14-21

Ave Regina Cælorum

HAIL, Queen of Heaven, beyond compare,
to whom the angels homage pay;
hail, Root of Jesse, Gate of Light,
that opened for the world's new Day.

Rejoice, O Virgin unsurpassed,
in whom our ransom was begun,
for all thy loving children pray
to Christ, our Saviour, and thy Son.

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

8th – 13th March 2021

Monday 8th March

Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever

Reading

Luke 4:24-30 (RSV)

Like Elijah and Elisha, Jesus is not sent only to the Jews

Jesus [came to Nazareth and speaking to the people in the synagogue] said, 'Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. ²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli'jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; ²⁶ and Eli'jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar'ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli'sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'aman the Syrian.' ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. ³⁰ But passing through the midst of them he went away.

Reflection

In today's Gospel, Jesus explains that the Gospel is for a wider audience than his own people – the locals of Nazareth and Israel. As Simeon foretold at the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the child is destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel. He is the Light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of his own people. Jesus' homily enrages the synagogue congregation and they want to kill him. Interesting that Jesus makes his point about the prophet not being acceptable in his own country by referring to two old stories. One concerns the prophet Elijah who (1 Kings 17:14) ministers to a widow from near Sidon – not therefore an Israelite – and the other the prophet Elisha who in today's first reading (2 Kings 5:1-15) heals Naaman, a Syrian army commander, of leprosy.

These stories from the ninth century BC – the famine in Elijah's time and the problem of leprosy in the time of Elisha, on whom the mantle of Elijah fell – have an urgent modern relevance. Our problems, in this part of the world, don't include famine – whatever the queuing shopping trollies outside supermarkets suggest – but we are beset by the fear of disease. My guess is that many who become socially isolated at this time will join with the verses from Psalm 42 and 43, set as today's psalm.

Tuesday 9th March

Reading

Matthew 18:21-35 (RSV)

Forgiveness and the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²¹ Peter came up and said to Jesus, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' ²² Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. ²³ Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; ²⁵ and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." ²⁷ And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a

hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, "Pay what you owe." ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; ³³ and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" ³⁴ And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.'

Reflection

TODAY'S Gospel follows on from a few verses about how, in the Early Church, someone who sins can be reconciled with the community. That reconciliation is a three-step procedure, involving, first, one-on-one reconciliation, then, if that does not work, reconciliation effected with the help of two or three witnesses, and finally the gathered Church community. If that fails, then exclusion follows. We are talking about personal relationships and estrangements and Peter, on behalf of the disciples, asks how often reconciliation has to be pursued. We are not sure whether the term he uses is the word here translated 'seventy times seven' is 490 or merely 77. Nor can we be sure about how much 10,000 talents is. The amount probably means what today we might refer to as a billion pounds, and, since we are talking about personal debts in this parable, the exact amount is not important. The lesser sum of one hundred denarii is more exact. It is the amount of money a labourer would earn in a hundred days, a denarius being, roughly, a day's wage. So, a significant debt but not a breath-taking amount. Jesus is teaching his disciples to learn that reconciliation with each other ought to be manageable since the debt is so small compared with the forgiveness offered by our heavenly Father to us.

Wednesday 10th March

Reading

Deuteronomy 4:1-9 (RSV)

Take notice of the laws and observe them

Moses said to the people, 'And now, O Israel, give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which I teach you, and do them; that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, gives you. ²You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it; that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ³Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Ba'al-pe'or; for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Ba'al of Pe'or; ⁴but you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive this day. ⁵Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day? ⁹Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

Reflection

Today's passage from Deuteronomy appears to suggest that those who perish are those who, like the Israelites who chased after foreign gods at Baal-peor. Apostasy brings death. This is a dangerous thought for us at a time of plague. In fact, the reading at Mass omits the difficult verses 2-4. Jesus himself deals with this question. In Luke 13:4 he has this to say:

Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Silo'am fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem?

He is clearly referring to a contemporary event, and speaking to disciples, troubled much as we were by the terrible accident at the decommissioning of Didcot Power Station three or four years ago.

What Moses is referring too principally is the link between Life and Fidelity. God is faithful to his promises and to those who love him. This teaching is further developed by Jesus in St John's Gospel, where he links abundant life with following him and abiding in his Love (John 15:9-10).

St Paul gives us a ringing reassurance of God's love in his letter to the Romans (8:37-39).

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Mother Julian of Norwich, the remarkable fourteenth century mystic, said the same thing in her *Revelations of Divine Love*:

'All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.'

Thursday 11th March

Reading

Luke 11;14-23[†] (RSV)

Jesus and Be-el'zebul

¹⁴ Now Jesus was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marvelled. ¹⁵ But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Be-el'zebul, the prince of demons'; ¹⁶ while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. ¹⁷ But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and house falls upon house. ¹⁸ And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul. ¹⁹ And if I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁰ But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then

[†] **Different readings are normally used for the School Mass.**

the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²¹ When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; ²² but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armour in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. ²³ He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Reflection

THE SETTING for the Gospel is Jesus' teaching his disciples about prayer. He then casts out a mute – that is, a deaf and dumb demon and the deaf and dumb person spoke. Two groups of onlookers commented: one commented that he was casting out demons by Beelzebul, the name of a Canaanite god used as a synonym for Satan; the other tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. We learn from this encounter how the kingdom of God is structured. The work of the Gospel is not through co-ercion but through the patient work of healing and exorcism. The strong man in the sayings has a palace and is heavily armed. If he is vigilant, everything seems safe. But there is a yet stronger one – Jesus is mightier than Satan – and we need to take sides. Jesus tells us that none who play their part in working for the common good are on the side of evil. Yet whoever does not congregate with Jesus is against him. One of the reasons we come together to worship is to congregate with Jesus as well as each other and thereby actively to choose to belong to him.

Friday 12th March

Reading

Mark 12:28-34 (RSV)

The Two Great Commandments

²⁸ One of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' ²⁹ Jesus answered, 'The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰ and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹ The Third is this, 'You shall love your

neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.’ ³² And the scribe said to him, ‘You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that he is one, and there is no other but he; ³³ and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbour as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.’ ³⁴ And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And after that no one dared to ask him any question.

Reflection

It’s hard to keep our practice of the Faith in balance. We know that we are to love God – say our prayers, obey his will – and we know that we have a duty towards our neighbour – caring for others and their well-being. Yet it is easy for us, in a cocoon of holiness, to ignore the needs of others. It is easy too to do everything we can think of for others and forget the love of God and the importance of prayer as the resource for all we do. At this time, when we seek to protect our families and friends, we can also build our own cocoon, and not see too far beyond. We face the twin challenge: how to be sustained in our spiritual lives without the comfort of corporate worship and the sacraments, and how truly to serve others, especially those beyond our ‘social isolation’. I say this not to criticise anyone: the real devotion of our communities and their willingness to look after one another is a real inspiration to me and I am sure to you too. May people know and see the love of God and his blessings at this time.

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THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MARK,

Chapter by Chapter

Mark 7 *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*

The Tradition of the Elders

7 Now when the Pharisees gathered together to him, with some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, ² they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands defiled, that is, unwashed. ³ (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands, observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴ and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they purify themselves; and there are many other traditions which they observe, the washing of cups and pots and vessels of bronze.) ⁵ And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled?' ⁶ And he said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

**'This people honours me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁷ in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'**

⁸ You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.'

⁹ And he said to them, 'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition! ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die'; ¹¹ but you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God) — ¹² then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³ thus making void the word of God through your tradition which you hand on. And many such things you do.'

¹⁴ And he called the people to him again, and said to them, 'Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile

him.' ¹⁷ And when he had entered the house, and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸ And he said to them, 'Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?' (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰ And he said, 'What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man.'

The Syrophenician Woman's Faith

²⁴ And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²⁵ And he entered a house, and would not have any one know it; yet he could not be hid. ²⁶ But immediately a woman, whose little daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell down at his feet. ²⁷ Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁸ And he said to her, 'Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁹ But she answered him, 'Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' ³⁰ And he said to her, 'For this saying you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.' ³¹ And she went home, and found the child lying in bed, and the demon gone.

Jesus Cures a Deaf Man

³² Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis. ³³ And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. ³⁴ And taking him aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue; ³⁵ and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, 'Eph'phatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' ³⁶ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁷ And he charged them to tell no one; but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁸ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, 'He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.' FINE