

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

Fourth Week of Lent

27th March – 2nd April 2022



CONTACT DETAILS

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27th March – 2nd April 2022

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

All masses at St Mary's live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendred

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

Sunday **FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT** **[ROSE]**
27th March **9.30am** **Parish Mass**
 11.15am **Mass at St Patrick's**
 5.30pm Adoration
 6pm **Holy Mass**

(Readings: Lent Week 4)

Monday of Fourth Week of Lent [Purple]
28th March 9.15am Holy Mass I The Agony in the Garden

Tuesday of Fourth Week of Lent [Purple]
29th March 9.15am Holy Mass II The Scourging at the Pillar

Wednesday of Fourth Week of Lent [Purple]
30th March **9am** Morning Prayer III The Crowning with Thorns
 9.15am Holy Mass FM Rev Michael Mahon 1999

Thursday of Fourth Week of Lent [Purple]
31st March 9.15am Holy Mass IV The Carrying of the Cross
 Private Intention (Annie Furlong)

5.30pm Adoration
6pm **Holy Mass** Peace in Europe

Friday
1st April **8.30am** Holy Mass at Hendred House V The Crucifixion
 3pm Adoration at Hendred House
 5pm Evensong at St Augustine's Church

Saturday of Fourth Week of Lent [Purple]
2nd April No Mass

Sunday **FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Passion Sunday)** **[PURPLE]**
3rd April **9.30am** **Parish Mass**
 11.15am **Mass at St Patrick's**
 5pm **Music for Passiontide**
 6pm **Holy Mass** (sung by the St Mary's Schola)

Confessions during Lent:
8.45am Sundays; after Mass, Monday to Friday;
or by arrangement

WHEN CAN I EAT SIMNEL CAKE?

MOTHERING SUNDAY – a.k.a. Refreshment Sunday – is traditionally the Sunday in the middle of Lent when we slightly relax our discipline of fasting and eat cake. The cake prescribed was Simnel Cake. No icing but lots of marzipan, including twelve balls of marzipan, representing the twelve apostles. In days gone by, those in service at the great houses were allowed home on Mothering Sunday and this cake was a welcome reunion celebration.

Customs change – and not everyone wants to eat cake on Refreshment Sunday, and getting through a whole cake in a day can be especially hard. So, although Simnel Cake is Lenten – no icing, remember – it has gradually become something people eat at Easter, when there can be days and days of cake.

In commercial terms, it would not really be possible to limit any food to one day. Without all those office and school Christmas lunches in December, even Turkey and Plum Pudding would be hard to supply. So another of the one day foods – Hot Cross Buns – would not appear in the shops if we really managed to limit them to one day. My own solution to that is to keep the supermarkets in business by eating Hot Cross Buns throughout Lent. A pleasant change from Autumn Crumpets, Summer Scones, and the festive fruit cake of Christmas and Easter.

There was almost a riot a few years ago when the shops produced 'Noughts and Crosses' Buns. Somebody had lost the plot and the novelty seems to have faded away. But producing goods that miss the point is part of the muddle of our society. Little – and not so little – chocolate eggs are around well before Easter and well after Eastertide. We have forgotten how to fast and how to feast. I don't think anyone has yet produced all-year-round Simnel Cake, which again answers my question.

When can I eat Simnel Cake? Now! Or at Easter! Or both!

Fr Andrew

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION

For a Christian response to bioethical challenges: We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTION

Monday 28th Sisters of St Lucy (Filippini) in the Diocese
Tuesday 29th Managers of Church Repositories
Wednesday 30th The Bishop of Clifton and the Bishop Emeritus of Northampton, Priests of this Diocese
Thursday 31st Wisdom House, Romsey
Friday 1st Union of Catholic Mothers
Saturday 2nd All Pastoral Area Pastoral Councils

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 27th March-2nd April: Ann Ansell, Hugh O'Connor, Mary O'Connor, Elizabeth McElroy, John Doyle, Ted Moore, Mary Thacker.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

ST AMAND'S CHILDREN AT ST MARY'S

At the end of 9.30am Mass on 27th March Patrick, Cullen, and Niamh from St Amand's, will talk about their chosen Lenten charities: HCPT and The Cardinal Hume Centre. They will have charity boxes a should parishioners wish to donate. See <https://www.hcpt.org.uk/>

SECOND COLLECTION

There is also a Second Collection on 27th March for the Clergy Assistance Fund. Use one of the yellow envelopes for this and write Gift Aid Number on it. Returns after 27th March should be marked Clergy Assistance Fund.

CARMELITE WEEKEND RETREAT (8th-10th April)

This weekend retreat with Fr Liam Finnerty OCD will be a time to journey with the Prophet Isaiah in preparation for Holy Week. You can attend online, come daily to the Priory for the session talks or stay at the Priory for the weekend retreat. The talks will be made available for later viewing to all those who register.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 20th March 2022, 218 people viewed, 82 machines looking only at St Mary's. 54 of these were in the UK and 28 from eight other countries, including two looking in from Russia. 109 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

SYCAMORE

The **SYCAMORE** course for adults interested in finding out more about the Faith or preparing for baptism and/or confirmation is now well underway and next meets on Zoom at 8pm on Tuesday 29th March.

PARISH SECRETARY

Contact Ma Lluïsa Jarne on office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk If you need to speak to her in person, she is available at one of the St Mary's Sunday masses and also on Mondays, 6pm-8pm, on 07983045824.

MISSIO BOXES

Margaret Maytham is asking those with red *Missio* boxes to hand them in for counting and re-supplying. Details at the back of the churches.

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2022

18th – 22nd July, flying from Bournemouth Airport.

lourdes@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

MUSIC FOR PASSIONTIDE

Sunday 3rd April is the beginning of what was traditionally called Passiontide, the two weeks leading up to Easter. To mark this, we are making special arrangements for that evening.

Missa, 3

P Opus le me- um, quid se- ci, aut quid mo-
lertus fa- ci- ti- ni? Re- spon- de mi-
hi. Quere- am ego a- d- xi- vos de ter- ra A-
gyp- ti et de do- mo ser- vi- tu- tis; quadra- gin-
ta annos in e- re- mo * Maria plu- i vo-
bis, et ob- li- ti es- tis me, di- cit Do- mi- nus.
V. Adde- si vos per de- sertum quadra- ginta annos in e-
re- mo, et go Do- mi- nus. * Maria plu- i
vo- bis, et ob- li- ti es- tis me, di- cit Do-
mi- nus. V. Glo- ri- a Pa- tris, et Fi- li- i, et Spi-
ri- tu- i Sanc- to. * Maria plu- i vo-
bis, et ob- li- ti es- tis me, di- cit Do- mi- nus.

At 5pm there will be 'Music for Passiontide', sung beautifully by the *St Mary's Schola*, and including not only anthems and motets but hymns for congregational participation.

After a short break, the 6pm Mass will follow, with simple music sung by the *Schola*.

'What', you may ask, 'is a *Schola*?' In cathedrals and monasteries, more elaborate music, requiring musical skill, is sung by a '*Schola Cantorum*', literally a 'school of singers'. The last outing of the Schola was for the 9.30am Mass on the occasion of the Bishop's Visiting.

Admission to both the 5pm concert and the 6pm mass will be free and people may choose to attend either or both. There will be long enough between the two to leave or arrive.

ST AMAND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk

WE HAVE the immense privilege of hosting in our parish a Catholic Primary School serving the local area.

Ann-Marie Kershaw, a Foundation Governor, writes:

We are very keen to attract more Catholic families to our school. Please do encourage parents to make contact and visit the school to see what a Catholic school education looks like. We are able to take children into all Year groups and still have places for our Reception intake in September '22.

And she adds the following up-to-date news about the school.

St Amand's RC Primary School in East Hendred started Lent with a whole school Mass on Ash Wednesday in St Mary's Church, East Hendred with our chaplain Mgr Andrew Burnham. The children have chosen two Lenten projects. KS1 are raising £800 to send a child on the HCPT (Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust) trip to Lourdes and KS2 are fundraising for the Cardinal Hume Centre for young homeless people in London. We are also praying for children in Ukraine and helping with a local village collection for refugees coming out of the Ukraine. Meanwhile our beautiful grounds are showing the first signs of spring with bright yellow daffodils everywhere and the Eco-Committee working hard to plant seeds and prepare an edible garden. We enjoyed dressing up for World Book Day and have just had a fantastic time taking part in British Science Week. Several parents came into school to tell us about their jobs and encourage enthusiasm for the many branches of Science. Like and follow us on Facebook or Twitter to get all our news! Visits to the school are always welcome and children who have transferred in year to our school have settled well and are happy and thriving.

Reflection – *Spiritual Warfare*



St Sophia's Cathedral. Kyiv

THE BISHOP'S Pastoral Letter this Lent has asked us to take part in spiritual warfare, combatting the evil that is besetting Europe:

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. *Ephesians 6:12*

The weapons in our armoury are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and here are some ways in which we can do these things.

I Prayer

Adoration and Mass

We have introduced periods of Adoration before Sunday evening Mass and certain midweek Mass.

Confession

Lent is the time to prepare for Easter. Confessions take place at 8.45am on Sundays and after Mass any weekday or on demand.

Rosary

We are encouraged to make good use of the Rosary, especially during Lent the Sorrowful Mysteries. There will usually be a public decade on each of the Sorrowful Mysteries after Mass on Mondays to Fridays but the Rosary is mainly a private devotion.

The Prayer to St Michael the Archangel

Though its public use was discontinued after Vatican II, Pope St John Paul II, in his battle against communism, recommended its use and Bishop Philip is now making a similar recommendation.

The prayer draws heavily on imagery from the Apocalypse which some find particularly helpful in a time of war.

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

Psalm 31

Rabbi Yaakov Bleich, the Chief Rabbi for Ukraine, has asked Jews and Christians around the world to pray Psalm 31 in solidarity with those in Ukraine who are under attack. Apparently millions of people are saying this psalm daily. Verses 2-6 are a convenient abbreviation, printed here. The full psalm is given at the end of the Bulletin (see pages 23-24 below).

1 A Psalm of David

2 In you, LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness deliver me;

3 incline your ear to me;
make haste to rescue me!
Be my rock of refuge,
a stronghold to save me.

4 For you are my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me.

5 Free me from the net they have set for me,
for you are my refuge.

6 Into your hands I commend my spirit;
you will redeem me, LORD, God of truth.

II Fasting and Abstinence

The formal fasts are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, when healthy adults under 60 years old are asked to make do with one main meal and a couple of snacks. The elderly and those with certain medical conditions are under no such obligation but all of us are asked to take whatever part we can in the spirit of fasting.

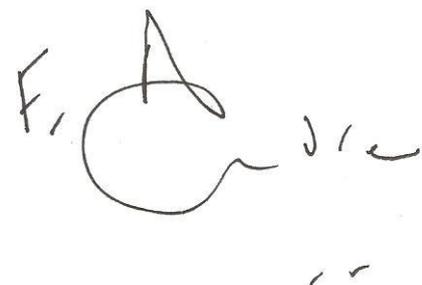
On Fridays throughout the year, except solemnities, and whatever our age, we are asked to do without meat, a small contribution to the care of the planet. Fasting and abstinence, like physical exercise, are ways of training the body but, as with any discipline, also impact on our spiritual life and can be 'offered up'.

III Almsgiving

Caritas-Spes had been working in Eastern Ukraine with the displaced families from the ongoing conflict in the disputed territories.

If you would like to support Caritas work in the emergency in Ukraine, please donate by visiting their website <https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/europe/ukraine-spes/>

Second Collection Those in our parishes who would like to contribute can use the CAFOD Lent Appeal envelopes: if you intend your donations specifically to benefit those in need in Ukraine, **please use envelopes marked 'Ukraine'**. Envelopes not so marked contain donations for the CAFOD's African cause.



East Hendred Catholic Parish



Fourth Sunday in Lent (C) Antiphons, Prayers and Readings

Lent Prose (see Mass booklet, no. 74)

Cantor (1st time) Full

Hear us, O Lord, have mer - cy up - on us:
for we have sinn'd a - gainst thee.

Entrance Antiphon

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

Lætare Ierusalem
cf Is 66:10-11

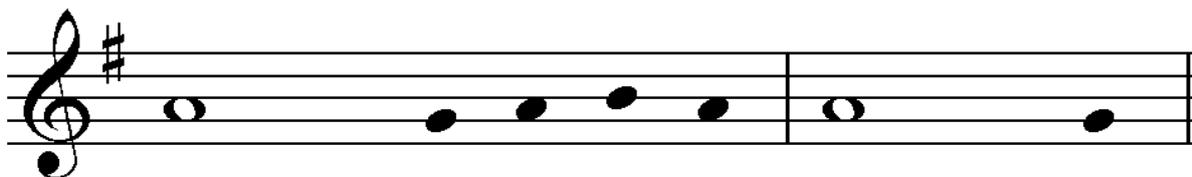
Collect

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. 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

Joshua 5:9-12 (RSV)

And the Lord said to Joshua, 'This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.' And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day. While the people of Israel were encamped in Gilgal they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. And on the morrow after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased on the morrow, when they ate of the produce of the land; and the people of Israel had manna no more, but ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.



R/ () () Taste and see |that the Lord is good.

I will bless the *Lord* at all times;
 praise of him is always in my *mouth*.
 In the Lord my soul *shall* make its boast;
 the humble shall hear and be *glad*. **R/**

Glorify *the* Lord with me;
 together let us praise his *name*.
 I sought the Lord, and *he* answered me;
 from all my terrors he set me *free*. **R/**

Look towards him *and* be rad-iant;
 let your faces not be a-*bashed*.
 This lowly one *called*; the Lord heard
 and rescued him from all his dis-*tress*. **R/**

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (RSV)

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Gospel Acclamation



R/ Praise to you, O Christ, King of e-ter-nal glo-ry.
 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.'
 R/ Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Gospel

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (RSV)

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable: There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in

want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Behold, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

Apostles' Creed (*see Mass booklet, page 6*)

Prayer over the Offerings

We place before you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(De spiritali pœnitentia)

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. For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure. And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

after St Alphonsus Liguori (18th cent.)

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Even 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

You must rejoice, my son, for your brother was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.

Oportet te, fili, gaudere

Lk 15:32

Prayer after Communion

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading

Monday Isaiah 65:17-21
Tuesday Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12
Wednesday Isaiah 49:8-15
Thursday Exodus 32:7-14
Friday Wisdom 2:1, 12-22
Saturday Jeremiah 11:18-20

(Lent Week 4)

John 4:43-54
John 5:1-3, 5-16
John 5:17-30
John 5:31-47
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
John 7:40-52

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (C)

Isaiah 43:16-21

Philippians 3:8-14

John 8:1-11

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

28th March – 1st April 2022

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. 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



The Prodigal Son

Monday in the Fourth Week of Lent

28th March

Reading

Isaiah 65:17-21 (RSV)

The Glorious New Creation

¹⁷ For behold, I create new heavens
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.

¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice for ever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,
and her people a joy.

¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.

²⁰ No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the child shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

Reflection

THE LAST couple of chapters of the Book of Isaiah give us a vision of a new world, a world where a just social and moral order will prevail over mere temple ritual. So the prophecies take us beyond the local to the universal, beyond a religious system to the way the whole world is ordered. Heaven is God's throne and the earth his footstool: he cannot be contained or defined by any temple. Jerusalem ceases to be the domain of a group of adherents but, reconfigured, becomes the mother to all believers. As the old Epistle for Mothering Sunday reminded us, 'the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother'. (Gal 4:26) In our journey through life, we are heading for the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven (Rev. 21:1-3), and God's New Creation, a place of houses and vineyards. Houses are the place of secure homes. Vineyards are the place where a settled community grows and flourishes. Talk of 'the

new heavens and the new earth' is a reminder to the Church under persecution – whether from hostile forces or from plague – that our homeland is indeed in heaven (Phil 3:20) that 'here we have no lasting city' for 'we seek the city which is to come.' (Heb 13:14)

Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

29th March

Reading

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12 (RSV)

The Stream of Water Flowing from the Temple

47 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. ² Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me round on the outside to the outer gate, that faces toward the east;^[a] and the water was coming out on the south side.

³ Going on eastward with a line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. ⁴ Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the loins. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. ⁶ And he said to me, 'Son of man, have you seen this?'

Then he led me back along the bank of the river. ⁷ As I went back, I saw upon the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ And he said to me, 'This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the stagnant waters of the sea, the water will become fresh. ⁹ And wherever the river^[a] goes every living creature which swarms will live, and there will be very many fish; for this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes..... ¹² And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear

fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.'

Reflection

WHEN we come across the passage from Ezekiel 47, about the stream of water flowing out from the temple, and irrigating a wide area, so that fruit trees and medicinal plants may grow by the riverside, we are reminded of a similar passage at the end of the Book of Revelation. Here the river of the Water of Life flows not from the threshold of the temple – as it does in Ezekiel – but from the throne of God and of the Lamb. We are also reminded of the *Vidi aquam* sung in Eastertide: 'I saw water flowing from the Temple.' The Paschal Mystery is when the prophecy of Ezekiel is fulfilled. Christ is the Water of Life, which we encounter in the miracle at Cana, where water from the purification jars becomes the new wine of the marriage feast. We encounter it too in the story of Jesus and the woman of Samaria, as they meet and draw water at the well. The Water of Life is not only fresh water, enabling things to grow and thrive, but water which quenches our spiritual thirst. As we journey on through Lent, towards Passiontide and Easter, we seek, through Christ, to grow and thrive, and we seek, in Christ, to encounter him who quenches our thirst.

Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

30th March

Reading

John 5:17-30 (RSV)

The Authority of the Son

Jesus said to the Jews, 'My Father is working still, and I am working.'¹⁸ This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹ Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead

and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. ²² The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

²⁵ Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, ²⁷ and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

³⁰ I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

Reflection

JESUS is in dispute with the Jewish leaders for most of John 5. The chapter begins with Jesus healing in Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day, a day on which no work should be done. The man healed has been ill for thirty-eight years so - no question - the healing could have waited until another day. Jesus therefore is deliberately choosing a feast day – we are not quite sure which one – and a Sabbath Day. His explanation is that since, in accordance with rabbinical teaching, only God works on the Sabbath, he is showing himself to be one with the Father. Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working still, and I am working.' (*John 5:17*)

Thursday in the Fourth Week of Lent

31st March

Reading

John 5:31-47 (RSV)

The Father who sent Jesus has himself borne witness to him.

³¹ If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; ³² there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true. ³³ You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴ Not that the testimony which I receive is from man; but I say this that you may be saved. ³⁵ He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. ³⁶ But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen; ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent. ³⁹ You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from men. ⁴² But I know that you have not the love of God within you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. ⁴⁴ How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵ Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. ⁴⁶ If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?'

Reflection

AS WE continue with John 5, the dispute between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, we should notice that, from verse 19 to verse 47, Jesus is the only one speaking. Today's reading, starting at verse 31, gives us simply what Jesus says to them. Though the passage begins with Jesus standing accused of wrong-doing – breaking the Sabbath – it is the Jewish leaders by the end of the chapter who stand accused. As with any trial – though this is an informal one – witnesses are called. In his defence Jesus has cited, in the first place, John the Baptist and then, more significantly the works that he performs which bear witness that is the Father who has

sent him. Only the source of Good – the Father - could be the author of the self-evidently good work of healing which Jesus accomplishes. In today's Gospel reading – the last part of the chapter - Jesus turns the tables on the Jewish leaders by saying that it is they who are accused and the witness to the charge against them is Moses – the Law of Moses, which for them is the ultimate authority. They stand accused by Moses and, if they do not accept his witness, how will they ever believe the words of Jesus?

Friday in the Fourth Week of Lent

1st April

Reading

Wisdom 2:1, 12-22 (RSV)

Let us lie in wait for the righteous man

2 For they reasoned unsoundly, saying to themselves,
'Short and sorrowful is our life,
and there is no remedy when a man comes to his end,
and no one has been known to return from Hades.
....

12 'Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,
because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;
he reproaches us for sins against the law,
and accuses us of sins against our training.

13 He professes to have knowledge of God,
and calls himself a child of the Lord.

14 He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;

15 the very sight of him is a burden to us,
because his manner of life is unlike that of others,
and his ways are strange.

16 We are considered by him as something base,
and he avoids our ways as unclean;
he calls the last end of the righteous happy,
and boasts that God is his father.

17 Let us see if his words are true,
and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;

18 for if the righteous man is God's son, he will help him,
and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.

19 Let us test him with insult and torture,

that we may find out how gentle he is,
and make trial of his forbearance.

²⁰ Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
for, according to what he says, he will be protected.'

²¹ Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray,
for their wickedness blinded them,

²² and they did not know the secret purposes of God,
nor hope for the wages of holiness,
nor discern the prize for blameless souls.

Reflection

IN THE Book of Wisdom we find ourselves with two worlds, contrasted with one another. One world is that of the righteous and the other is the world of the wicked. The righteous believe in the very things the wicked reject and the wicked therefore attack the righteous to see whether reliance on God for help and deliverance is of any use or not. We hear their reasoning in the reading today. For us, the relevance of the Passion and Death of Jesus to what is described here is more than obvious: 'Let us condemn him to a shameful death' puts us in mind of the events of Holy Week. There is a more general application of the 'two worlds' to our own day. Obvious oppositions are there between communities and countries which live in peace with others and those which attack and destroy others. Less obvious but perhaps more insidious is the rivalry between ways of life, the one seeking the fundamental well-being of others and working for the advancement of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, the other simply seeking its own pleasure at the expense of and regardless of the needs of others. The challenge for Christians in Lent is that these two worlds are not the world of the Church and the outside world. Sin abounds in the Church and in the lives of individual Christians and quite evidently there is plenty of goodness and unselfish service of others in the lives of many who do not subscribe to the Christian Faith.

APPENDIX Psalm 31 (Revised Grail)

1 A Psalm of David

- 2 In you, LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness deliver me;
- 3 incline your ear to me;
make haste to rescue me!
Be my rock of refuge,
a stronghold to save me.
- 4 For you are my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me.
- 5 Free me from the net they have set for me,
for you are my refuge.
- 6 Into your hands I commend my spirit;
you will redeem me, LORD, God of truth.
- 7 You hate those who serve worthless idols,
but I trust in the LORD.
- 8 I will rejoice and be glad in your mercy,
once you have seen my misery,
[and] got to know the distress of my soul.
- 9 You will not abandon me into enemy hands,
but will set my feet in a free and open space.

II

- 10 Be gracious to me, LORD, for I am in distress;
affliction is wearing down my eyes,
my throat and my insides.
- 11 My life is worn out by sorrow,
and my years by sighing.
My strength fails in my affliction;
my bones are wearing down.
- 12 To all my foes I am a thing of scorn,
and especially to my neighbours
a horror to my friends.
When they see me in public,
they quickly shy away.
- 13 I am forgotten, out of mind like the dead;
I am like a worn-out tool.

- 14 I hear the whispers of the crowd;
terrors are all around me.
They conspire together against me;
they plot to take my life.
- 15 But I trust in you, LORD;
I say, 'You are my God.'
- 16 My destiny is in your hands;
rescue me from my enemies,
from the hands of my pursuers.
- 17 Let your face shine on your servant;
save me in your mercy.
- 18 Do not let me be put to shame,
for I have called to you, LORD.
Put the wicked to shame;
reduce them to silence in Sheol.
- 19 Strike dumb their lying lips,
which speak arrogantly against the righteous
in contempt and scorn.

III

- 20 How great is your goodness, Lord,
stored up for those who fear you.
You display it for those who trust you,
in the sight of the children of Adam.
- 21 You hide them in the shelter of your presence,
safe from scheming enemies.
You conceal them in your tent,
away from the strife of tongues.
- 22 Blessed be the LORD,
marvellously he showed to me
his mercy in a fortified city.
- 23 Though I had said in my alarm,
'I am cut off from your eyes.'
Yet you heard my voice, my cry for mercy,
when I pleaded with you for help.
- 24 Love the LORD, all you who are faithful to him.
The LORD protects the loyal,
but repays the arrogant in full.
- 25 Be strong and take heart,
all who hope in the LORD.