

**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

Corpus Christi

19th – 26th June 2022



Reflection

Corpus Christi

ON THE NIGHT before he died, Jesus had supper with his disciples. They were showing signs of bewilderment and stress, though they did not know exactly what was to happen. Later, Jesus would be betrayed, handed over for trial, kept overnight, mocked and tortured. In the morning he was led out to be crucified, and his disciples fled in terror. Only the women stayed by to watch. His crucifixion was not the end, however. He was laid in a tomb but on the third day – the first Easter Day – once the Sabbath was over, his followers came to embalm the body only to discover that the tomb was empty. As he had promised, he had risen from the dead. He appeared to over 500 of his followers (1 Cor. 15) and fifty days later, following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, 3,000 were converted in one day (Acts 2). Thereafter, the Faith spread like wildfire.

Before he died, Jesus took the bread and wine used for the *Kiddush* and said 'This is my Body...This is my Blood...Do this in memory of me'. Ever since, the Church has gathered, Sunday by Sunday, and day by day, to repeat this act. We don't have another supper – in fact it is usually in the morning that we meet – because we are remembering the whole mystery: Maundy Thursday (Last Supper), Good Friday (Passion and Death), Easter Sunday (Resurrection). Catholics believe – because this is what Jesus said – that the bread and wine we take and bless becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, the food of eternal life for us.

Why have this celebration today, *Corpus Christi*? *Corpus Christi* goes back to the thirteenth century and arose from the realisation that the dark shadow over Maundy Thursday, and the incompleteness of that occasion, means that we should really set aside a special day to give thanks to God for the wonderful gift of the Mass and of Holy Communion. Such a special day had to be after Easter – to include Easter – and, once Pentecost and Trinity were out of the way, we are free to focus very closely on the gift of the Blessed Sacrament. Normally *Corpus Christi* is on the Thursday after Trinity but, by special arrangement, the hierarchy of England and Wales (amongst those of other nations) transfers the solemnity to the following Sunday, in practice drawing more people into the celebration.

Holy Communion is the beginning of a regular relationship with Jesus Christ, present to us in the Blessed Sacrament. Few can manage to receive Holy Communion as their 'daily bread'. Most can manage to celebrate Sunday, the day of the Lord's Resurrection, by attending Mass faithfully and receiving Holy Communion devoutly and frequently.

Fr Andrew

WEEK 12 YEAR 2

19th -26th June 2022

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

Church is open from 9am until late afternoon

CORPUS CHRISTI

19th June

9.30am Parish Mass
11.15am Mass (St Patrick's)
12.30pm Holy Baptism (Emily Holligan)
5pm Vespers with Exposition & Benediction
6pm Holy Mass

[White]
Pro populo

Monday 20th June

St Alban, Martyr
9.15am Holy Mass

[Red]

Tuesday 21st June

St Aloysius Gonzaga, Religious
9.15am Holy Mass *FM Eddie Reevey 1999*

[Red]

Wednesday 22nd June

SS John Fisher, Bishop, & Thomas More, Martyrs
9.15am Holy Mass *FM Thomas More Eyston 2012*

[Red]

Thursday 23rd June

NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST (anticipated) [White]
9.15am **School Mass**

Friday 24th June

MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS [White]
9.15am **Holy Mass (Hendred House)** *Holy Souls*

Saturday 25th June

Immaculate Heart of Mary [White]
No Mass

SUNDAY 13C PER ANNUM

26th June

9.30am Parish Mass
11.15am Mass (St Patrick's)
12.30pm Holy Baptism (Ella King)
6pm Holy Mass

[Green]
Pro populo

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk is monitored by the Parish Secretary.



Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

***Closer to Christ* Campaign Announcement Letter**

East Hendred Catholic Parish

Dear Parishioners of East Hendred,

I am sure you will agree when I say this last year has continued to be challenging. Yet although many aspects of our lives have been impacted, our Catholic faith has remained the one constant. I am encouraged by those returning to Mass, the large numbers who have joined livestream liturgies, parishioners supporting neighbours, friends and loved ones. I also wish to thank wholeheartedly those clergy who have worked so tirelessly to sustain and support the communities under their care. It is this steadfast commitment that has progressed the Church across the Diocese of Portsmouth since the late 19th century.

As a faith community, we have been through some challenging times in the past yet by God's grace, we have always shown resilience, compassion and generosity. Fifteen years ago, the *Living Our Faith* campaign had a tremendous and wide-reaching effect, and I am grateful for all it enabled. I am confident now with the intercession of the parish of East Hendred and our patron, St Edmund of Abingdon, that we have the strength to continue our great mission of 'Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church'.

Further to much prayer, consideration and consultation with clergy and laity, we have embarked on a new fundraising initiative entitled the ***Closer to Christ*** Campaign. This will build upon the mission of our church, enabling us to continue our journey to become ever more outward facing and evangelistic, while meeting the immediate financial priorities of parishes, who are the backbone of our Church.

Central to the success of our mission, is the continued support of our clergy at all stages of ministry, those individuals who give their lives to serve our parish communities. ***Closer to Christ*** will fund our seminarians and priests in active ministry and rejuvenate our parishes, ensuring they have the necessary resources to provide a place for prayer, worship and community interaction, meeting a broad range of faith needs and giving them a platform to thrive. We must also care for our priests in their retirement, recognising the important work they have achieved in delivering our mission and the contribution they continue to make in so many ways following a life of service and dedication to local parish life.

The ***Closer to Christ*** Campaign is a 'call to action' which invites parishioners to become more fully and sacrificially involved in the life of the Church – to collectively build God's Kingdom and live the Gospel, especially in providing for others. Simultaneously, the ***Closer to Christ*** Campaign reflects a commitment to enhanced communications and stewardship of donors' generosity. Over the next two years, every parish will participate in this endeavour. We began the Campaign last year, with ten parishes taking part so far and I am delighted that East Hendred will be part of the next group of parishes leading the way.

In the coming months, Father Andrew will be sharing with you in more detail the objectives of this initiative – through individual conversations, telephone/video calls and announcements at Mass. I appreciate your willingness to learn more, ask questions, consider the role you could play and importantly pray for our success.

Towards the end of his Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul says: "There is no need to worry, but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving" (Phil 4: 6). I look forward to us all accomplishing together the Lord's work, moving from maintenance to mission.

In Corde Iesu

+Philip

Bishop of Portsmouth

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S JUNE PRAYER INTENTION

We pray for Christian families around the world; may they embody and experience unconditional love and advance in holiness in their daily lives.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTION

Sunday 19 th	Day for Life (National Cycle of Prayer)
Monday 20 th	Military Chapel of St Alban, Shrivenham
Tuesday 21 st	'Parish of Sacred Heart, Bordon; Parish of St Mary, Woolhampton
Wednesday 22 nd	Parish of SS Anne & Mary Magdalen, Alderney; Communities of St Thomas More at Stockbridge, Hartley Wintney, & Boars' Hill; Communities of St John Fisher at Whitchurch & Reading.
Thursday 23 rd	Parish of St John the Baptist, Andover
Friday 24 th	Community of Sacred Heart, Shanklin
Saturday 25 th	Parish of St Mary, Alton

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 19th - 25th June: Anna Hogan, George John Castle

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

WE ARE restarting Children's Church today, 19th June, with a short meeting immediately after Mass. Children's Church is being co-ordinated by Libby Holderness and she will be interested to hear from those who are happy to help. (To contact her, office@hundredcatholicparish.org.uk and we shall pass it on). We need two volunteers per session but there are usually enough for this to be easily manageable. One volunteer needs to be a DBS-checked leader, confident to supervise the activities. The other needs to be a willing helper, probably the parent of an under-four-year old with more of a 'play and share' role. There is plenty of scope, however, for older adults to help.

From 26th June Children's Church will meet in St Mary's Parish Rooms, starting at 9.15am on Sunday, which enables parents to drop off and join the 9.30am Mass. At the beginning of the Offertory, the children will be escorted back to St Mary's to re-join their parents. Children under-four need to have a parent with them during the session.

Those who attend Children's Church and join Mass half-way through are fulfilling their Mass obligation.

The diocese suggests that Keystage 2 children, and particularly those who have made their First Communion, should attend Mass with their parents, so Children's Church is really for toddlers and Keystage 1 children.

Children's Church meets only during school term-times. During the holidays, especially or religious festivals, it is important for children to experience the whole of the Mass with their parents.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

COFFEE IN ST MARY'S PARISH ROOMS

Work is well-advanced on St Mary's Parish Rooms and we hope that in June we shall reopen. It is hoped to start coffee after 9.30am Mass in the newly refurbished rooms in June (date to be confirmed) We very much hope men and women will volunteer to join the coffee rota so that we can once again enjoy this friendly get together after Mass. For further information please contact Francia Kilgarriff on 07899675784.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 12th June 2022, 185 people viewed, 63 machines looking only at St Mary's. 36 of these were in the UK, 21 in the USA, six from other countries. 110 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

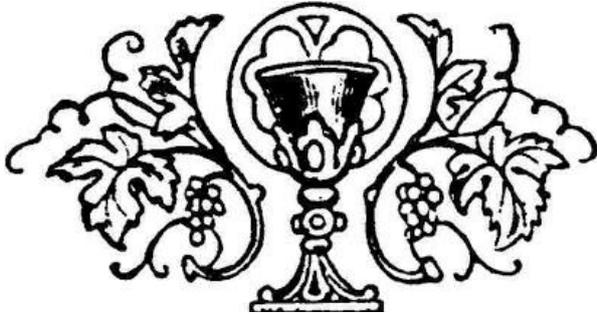
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The meeting will be this Thursday, 23rd June at 8pm. We shall meet (we hope) in St Mary's Parish Rooms but it may be on Zoom. Watch this space! As the Council is reconstituted, in the first instance, those who formed the Standing Committee during the pandemic are invited to this meeting.

FR ANDREW ON THE FUNDING CAMPAIGN

Please read the Bishop's Letter carefully: all parishes must take their turn and it is our turn now. I have selected a number of people to speak to in the very first stage. I don't know what your financial commitment to the parish is and I shall not know what additional commitment, if any, you decide to make for this diocesan-cum-parish scheme. I wish I could speak to everyone so, inevitably, the list for the very first stage is a bit arbitrary. Thankyou for your help and support.

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**The Most Holy
Body and Blood of
Christ (Corpus
Christi) (C)**

**Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Cibavit eos

He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

Cf Ps 80:17

Collect

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption. Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

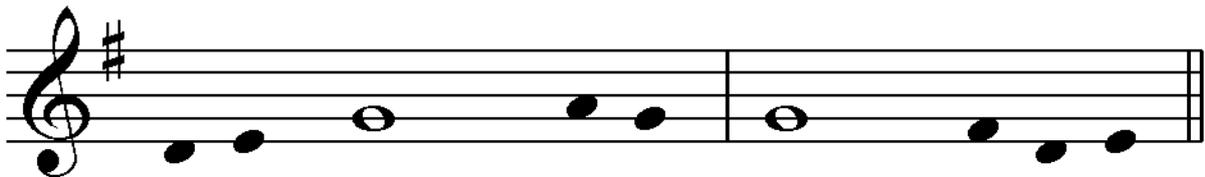
First Reading

Genesis 14:18-20 (RSV)

Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed Abram and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, maker of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Psalm 110:1-4 R/ 4 (Grail)

Tone II.1



R/ *You are a priest for e-ver, |
a priest like Melchize-dek of old.*

The Lord's revelation to *my* Lord:
'Sit at my right hand, ~
until I make your foes *your* foot-stool.' **R/**

The Lord will send from Zion your sceptre *of* power:
rule in the midst *of* your foes. **R/**

With you is princely rule on the day of *your* power.
In holy splendour, from the womb before the dawn, ~
I have be-*got*-ten you. **R/**

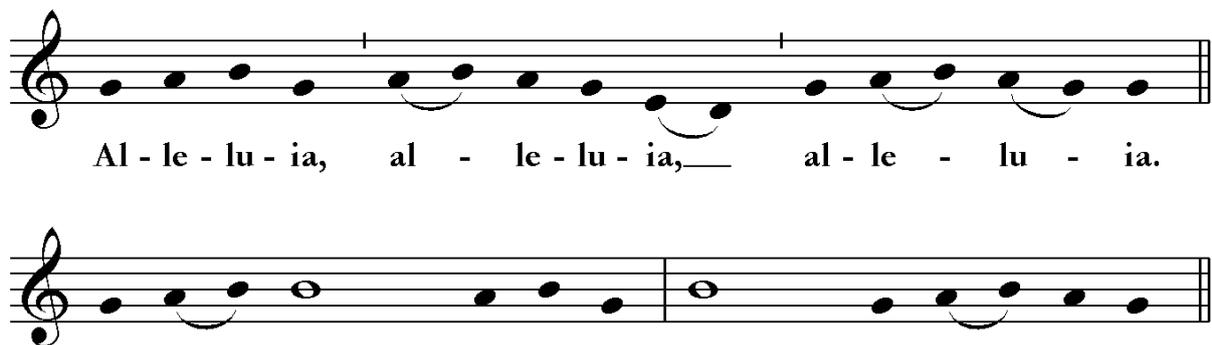
The Lord has spoken an oath he will *not* change:
You are a priest for ever, in the line of Mel-*chi*-ze-dek. **R/**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (RSV)

I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the chalice, after supper, saying, 'This chalice is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the chalice, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Gospel Acclamation



I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, *says* the Lord;
anyone who eats this bread will *live* for e - ver.

Gospel*Luke 9:11-17 (RSV)*

Jesus spoke to the crowds of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing. Now the day began to wear away; and the Twelve came and said to him, 'Send the crowd away, to go into the villages and country round about, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a lonely place.' But he said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' They said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish -- unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, 'Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each.' And they did so, and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant your Church, O Lord, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace, whose signs are to be seen in mystery in the offerings we here present. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface*De sacrificio et de sacramento Christi*

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For he is the true and eternal Priest, who instituted the pattern of an everlasting sacrifice, and was the first to offer himself as the saving Victim, commanding us to make this offering for his memorial. As we eat his flesh that was sacrificed for us, we are made strong, and, as we drink his Blood that was poured out for us, we are washed clean. 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...

Communion Antiphon*Qui manducat*

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

John 6:57

Prayer after Communion

Grant, O Lord, we pray, that we may delight for all eternity in that share in your divine life, which is foreshadowed in the present age by our reception of your precious Body and Blood. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Salve Regina

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 send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.

Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Scripture Reading (Week 12 [Year II] *Per Annum*)

Monday	2 Kings 17:5-8, 13-15, 18	Matthew 7:1-5
Tuesday	2 Kings 19:9-11, 14-21, 31-35, 36	Matthew 7:6, 12-14
SS John Fisher, Bishop, & Thomas More, Martyrs		
Wednesday	2 Maccabees 6:18, 21, 24-31	Matthew 24:4-13
NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST		
Thursday	Isaiah 49:1-6 Acts 13:22-26	Luke 1:57-66, 80
SACRED HEART OF JESUS C		
Friday	Ezekiel 34:11-16 Romans 5:5-11	Luke 15:3-7
<i>Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>		
Saturday	Isaiah 61:9-11	Luke 2:41-51
SUNDAY 13 C		
Sunday	1 Kings 19:16, 19-21 Galatians 5:1, 13-18	Luke 9:51-62

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The Litany of the Sacred Heart

June is traditionally the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is the month in which we celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (on the first available Friday after Eastertide). Many find the Litany of the Sacred Heart helpful in their devotions.

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

**Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy**

God our Father in heaven
God the Son, Redeemer of the world
God the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity, one God

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Heart of Jesus, Son of the eternal Father
Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit
 in the womb of the Virgin Mother
Heart of Jesus, one with the eternal Word
Heart of Jesus, infinite in majesty
Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God
Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High
Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Heart of Jesus, aflame with love for us
Heart of Jesus, source of justice and love
Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love
Heart of Jesus, well-spring of all virtue
Heart of Jesus, worthy of all praise
Heart of Jesus, king and centre of all hearts
Heart of Jesus, treasure-house of wisdom and knowledge

**have mercy on us
have mercy on us**

Heart of Jesus, in whom there dwells the fullness of God

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father is well pleased

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, from whose fullness we have all received

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, desire of the eternal hills

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, patient and full of mercy

have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, generous to all who turn to you **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with insults **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, broken for our sins **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, obedient even to death **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, pierced by a lance **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, victim of our sins **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, salvation of all who trust in you **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, hope of all who die in you **have mercy on us**
Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints **have mercy on us**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world **have mercy on us**
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world **have mercy on us**
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world **have mercy on us**

V/ Jesus, gentle and humble of heart.
R/ **Touch our hearts and make them like your own.**

Let us pray.

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that we, who glory in the Heart of your beloved Son
and recall the wonders of his love for us,
may be made worthy to receive
an overflowing measure of grace
from that fount of heavenly gifts.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

20th – 25th June 2021

Monday in Week 12 [Year 2]

20th June

Reading

2 Kings 17:5-8, 13-15, 18 (RSV)

The Lord thrust Israel away from him and there was none left but the tribe of Judah

Shalmaneser the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samar'ia, and for three years he besieged it. ⁶In the ninth year of Hoshe'a the king of Assyria captured Samar'ia, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

⁷And this was so, because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods ⁸and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs which the kings of Israel had introduced.... ¹³Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets." ¹⁴But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. ¹⁵They despised his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and the warnings which he gave them. They went after false idols, and became false, and they followed the nations that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do

like them.... ¹⁸ Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight; none was left but the tribe of Judah only.

Reflection

TODAY we hear about the downfall of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, after Shalmaneser King of Assyria had laid siege to Samaria for three years. The Israelites were carted off to Assyria. This was in the year 724BC. The historian reminds his audience that the Lord had warned Israel and Judah about keeping the Law and the collapse of Israel was the result. The Southern Kingdom, Judah, continues, for the time being. This is a very clear example of how the historian relates catastrophes and events to the keeping of the Law. When the people stray from the strait path disaster befalls them.

Tuesday in Week 12 [Year 2]

21st June

Reading

2 Kings 19:9-11, 14-21, 31-35, 36 (RSV)

Hezekiah's Prayer

⁹ When [Sennacherib, the king of the Assyrians] heard concerning Tirha'kah king of Ethiopia, 'Behold, he has set out to fight against you,' he sent messengers again to Hezeki'ah, saying, ¹⁰ 'Thus shall you speak to Hezeki'ah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, destroying them utterly. And shall you be delivered?

¹⁴ Hezeki'ah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezeki'ah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵ And Hezeki'ah prayed before the LORD, and said: 'O LORD the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennach'erib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁷ Of a truth, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, ¹⁸ and have cast their gods into the

fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they were destroyed. ¹⁹ So now, O LORD our God, save us, I beseech you, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone.'

²⁰ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezeki'ah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennach'erib king of Assyria I have heard. ²¹ This is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him:

'She despises you, she scorns you—
the virgin daughter of Zion;
she wags her head behind you—
the daughter of Jerusalem.

³¹ for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD will do this.

³² Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³³ By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, says the LORD. ³⁴ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.'

³⁵ And that night the angel of the LORD went forth, and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶ Then Sennach'erib king of Assyria departed, and went home, and dwelt at Nin'evah.

Reflection

YESTERDAY'S reading was from 2 Kings 17, the downfall of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, after Shalmaneser King of Assyria had laid siege to Samaria for three years. The Israelites were carted off to Assyria. This was in the year 724BC. The historian reminds his audience that the Lord had warned Israel and Judah about keeping the Law and the collapse of Israel was the result. The Southern Kingdom, Judah, continues, for the time being.

We pick up the story today a couple of chapters later. By now we have the reign of Hezekiah in Judah (715-687) – the first of two good kings. The second of the good kings of Judah, Josiah (640-609), is a generation later, but only a generation later (587), Judah is conquered by the Babylonians and the Exile begins. Between Hezekiah and Josiah, and between Josiah and the Exile, the Southern Kings are up to their normal tricks. The great sin is apostasy – pursuing idolatry and forsaking the Law.

These are troubled times. Even for Hezekiah, the Assyrian threat looms large. The Assyrians write a threatening letter. Hezekiah responds by taking it to the Temple and consulting the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah reassures Hezekiah that the Lord will protect Judah from Assyria. Sure enough, 185,000 men are struck down in the Assyrian camp. It is a supernatural victory: credit is given to the angel of the Lord.

It is clear that, even under righteous regimes, the threat of death and disaster remains. For us, as for Hezekiah, there is a comforting verse in the psalm we used today:

**We have thought on your mercy, O God,
in the midst of your temple.**

It is when we resort to the Lord's House in prayer – as Hezekiah did – that we encounter the merciful reassurance of the living God, amidst our troubles. I am reminded of another verse, the one Martin Luther paraphrased in German in the chorale and cantata *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*:

**God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble. Ps 46:1**

SS John Fisher, Bishop, and Thomas More, Martyrs

Wednesday 22nd June

Reading

Matthew 24:4-13 (RSV)

Persecutions foretold

Jesus answered them, 'Take heed that no one leads you astray. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Christ," and they will lead many astray. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: ⁸all this is but the beginning of the sufferings.

⁹'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. ¹³But he who endures to the end will be saved.'

Reflection

IN EVERY generation – not least our own – there are those who point to the signs of the times – disaster, drought, earthquake, famine, plague, and war – as signs that everything all around us is collapsing. The Early Church certainly wrestled with this and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD70 were viewed with particular foreboding. There was a particularly acute version of despair as the year AD1,000 – the end of the millennium – hove into view and all this was revisited in modern times as AD2,000 approached. In fact, from the nineteenth century onwards, various Christian movements were formed with a particular emphasis on the urgency of the End-Times. In the Catholic Church, similarly, attention was focused on the appearances of Our Lady of Fatima, towards the end of the First World War (which was viewed as the war to end all wars).

The Fatima predictions continued – and continue – to fuel what we call ‘apocalyptic expectation’, the feeling that the End is coming and a final showdown and manifestation of the power of God. All of this builds on Jewish apocalyptic – which was very much around at the time of Jesus – and, if we read certain passages of the New Testament, the coming of Christ in glory seems imminent. In that sense, Matthew, who uses the same material as Mark, calms things down. Note the sentence in the Gospel: ‘this must take place, but the end is not yet’. Note too the words of Jesus, ‘all this is but the beginning of the sufferings’.

What St Matthew was doing was adding length and perspective to the predictions about the End Time. ‘You will be hated by all nations’ makes it clear that the End Time would not happen imminently, whilst Christianity remained a local, Jewish denomination. The Gentile Mission, on which St Matthew is very keen, has to happen first. Nor will it be an easy success. ‘Wickedness is multiplied’ and ‘most men’s love will grow cold’. The final outcome is assured: ‘he who endures to the end will be saved.’

The life and death of the two saints, John Fisher and Thomas More, are a worked example of what is set out in today’s Gospel. Both suffered for their faith. Both were the victims of wickedness...multiplied. In the struggle that we now call the Reformation, whilst anger blazed love grew cold. It is heartening that, with the perspective of history, Catholics and Anglicans recognise Fisher and More as martyrs. We keep them together: for Catholics the feast is on 22 June, the date on which Cardinal John Fisher was beheaded; for Anglicans the feast is 6 July, the date on which the brave Sir Thomas More was martyred for opposing the royal attack on the authority of Holy Church.

THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Thursday 23rd June (*anticipated*)

Reading

Luke 1:57-66, 80 (RSV)

His Name is John

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown

great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechari'ah after his father, ⁶⁰ but his mother said, 'Not so; he shall be called John.' ⁶¹ And they said to her, 'None of your kindred is called by this name.' ⁶² And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, 'His name is John.' And they all marvelled. ⁶⁴ And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ⁶⁵ And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; ⁶⁶ and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, 'What then will this child be?' For the hand of the Lord was with him...⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Reflection

THE LONGEST day, the Summer Solstice is the day when the earth's axis is tilted most closely to the sun, the day on which there is most daylight. Not everyone realises that the Church celebrates the times of longest daylight and longest night. The Birth of St John the Baptist – his Nativity – is just after the summer solstice and the Birth of Jesus Christ – Christmas – is just after the winter solstice, when the earth's axis is tilted furthest from the sun.

The Gospel Canticle used in Morning Prayer is the *Benedictus*, in which Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, hails John as the prophet of the Dawn, the Dayspring from on high, the one who looks towards the coming of the Light. And, as the longer Creed reminds us, Jesus – God the Son – is *Lumen de lumine*, Light from Light.

The two men are cousins, John being six months older than Jesus, as the familiar narrative of the Annunciation reminds us – 'In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God...to a virgin [whose] name was Mary.' Just a few verses earlier, the same archangel had appeared to Zechariah, the priest praying in the temple at the altar of incense. St John the Precursor, or Forerunner, as the Orthodox Church calls him, is given greater significance in the East than in the West and in the words of Jesus we see a conundrum:

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matt 11:11

The least in the kingdom of heaven - the least in the new dispensation - is greater than John the Baptist because John died before the Crucifixion. But no one is greater than John because of his role as the last of the prophets of the Old Covenant, a New Elijah, preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah, and identifying him: 'Behold, the Lamb of God'. We see a happy coming-together of the three figures, Mary, John the Baptist, and Jesus. They are inextricably linked in the narrative, and we are not surprised to notice that, in the Calendar, only with these three figures - Mary, John the Baptist, and Jesus - do we honour their birthday.

MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Friday 24th June

Collect

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that we, who glory in the Heart of your Beloved Son and recall the wonders of his love for us, may be made worthy to receive an overflowing measure of grace from that fount of heavenly gifts. 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

Matthew 11:25-30 (RSV)

I am gentle and lowly of heart

Jesus said ²⁵At that time Jesus declared, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle

June is the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Meditation by St Thérèse of Lisieux

I need a heart burning with tenderness,
Who will be my support for ever,
Who loves everything in me, even my weakness...
And who never leaves me day or night.
I could find no creature
Who could always love me day or night.
I could find no creature
Who could always love me and never die.
I must have a God who takes on my nature
And becomes my brother and is able to suffer!
You heard me, only Friend whom I love.
To ravish my heart, you became man.
You shed your blood, what a supreme mystery!
O heart of Jesus, treasure of tenderness,
You yourself are my happiness, my only hope.
You who knew how to charm my tender youth,
Stay near me till the last night...
Ah! I know well, all our righteousness
Is worthless in your sight.
To give value to my sacrifices,
I want to cast them into your Divine Heart.
You did not find your angels without blemish.
In the midst of lightning you gave your law!
I hide myself in your Sacred Heart, Jesus.
I do not fear, my virtue is you!