

**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



**FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT
28th November – 4th December 2021**

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28th November – 4th December 2021

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

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT *[Purple]*
Sunday 28th November *Pro populo*
9.30am Parish Mass
11.15am Holy Mass
6pm Holy Mass
at St Patrick's, East Ilsley

Monday 29th November *Of the First Week of Advent* *[Purple]*
9.15am Holy Mass

Tuesday 30th November **St Andrew, Apostle** *[red]*
No Mass [red]

Wednesday 1st December St Edmund Campion, Priest, Martyr *[red]*
9.15am Holy Mass

Thursday 2nd December *Of the First Week of Advent* *[Purple]*
9.15am Holy Mass

Friday 3rd December St Francis Xavier, Priest *[white]*
9.15am Holy Mass

Saturday 4th December *Of the First Week of Advent* *[Purple]*
No Mass

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT *[Purple]*
Sunday 5th December *Pro populo*
9.30am Parish Mass
11.15am Holy Mass
6pm Holy Mass
at St Patrick's, East Ilsley

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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Reflection

'Advent: The Middle Coming'

St Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermon for Advent, in: The Divine Office, Wednesday of the First Week of Advent

WE know that the coming of the Lord is threefold: the third coming is between the other two and it is not visible in the way they are. At his first coming the Lord was seen on earth and lived among men, who saw him and hated him. At his last coming all flesh shall see the salvation of our God, and they shall look on him whom they have pierced. In the middle, the hidden coming, only the chosen see him, and they see him within themselves; and so their souls are saved. The first coming was in flesh and weakness, the middle coming is in spirit and power, and the final coming will be in glory and majesty. This middle coming is like a road that leads from the first coming to the last. At the first, Christ was our redemption; at the last, he will become manifest as our life; but in this middle way he is our rest and our consolation.'

NONE of us saw the first coming of Christ and we are warned not to speculate about the time of what St Bernard calls the 'third' coming, the winding up of all things in what is more generally referred to as the 'Second Coming'. What we do experience – though do not of course see – is the 'Middle Coming'. We gain a sense of that in the stillness of our hearts, when reading or praying, and even more so in the reception of Holy Communion, when Christ comes and makes his home in us. There are other meanings of Advent too: the Sarum Gospel for Advent Sunday, retained by the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, is Matthew's account of the Triumphal Entry. Jesus enters the city to bring his ministry to its climax in his suffering, death, and resurrection. He comes as King to inaugurate his Kingdom. Something of the same emphasis on Kingship is there in the Gospel for Advent Sunday in Year C. We hear St Luke's 'little apocalypse' (Luke 21:25-38) and the prediction of the Son of Man coming to reign in glory and we are reminded that, only a fortnight ago, in the Gospel for Sunday 33B, we heard the equivalent passage from Mark 13. By careful attention to the stories of Christmas and the final triumph of Christ's Kingly rule, we discover ever more deeply the meaning of the 'middle coming'.

Fr Andrew

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

We pray this week for all affected by the ravages of war and for those who have lost their lives in combat. We pray too for the people of Afghanistan and all who are seeking to prevent and relieve the onset of famine.

HOLY FATHER'S NOVEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that people who suffer from depression or burn-out will find support and a light that opens them up to life.

HOLY FATHER'S DECEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

Let us pray that every country decides to take necessary measures to make the future of children a priority, especially the future of children who are suffering today.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 28th November-4th December: William Flanagan, Albert Castle, Teresa Brown, Christine Buck, Harry Wiley, Denis Buckley, Rebecca Smith.



CAFOD World gifts

As we rejoice in once again celebrating Christmas with our loved ones, let us spread our joy around the world by having a CAFOD World Gift under the tree. From energy saving stoves to weatherproof crops to emergency shelters, CAFOD's virtual charity gifts help transform the lives of families living in poverty. Buy online at cafod.org.uk/worldgifts or pick up a catalogue from the back of church.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

BOOKING FOR MASS

Booking is needed for St Patrick's, from 28th November onwards, because the available space is much smaller.

We shall also be taking bookings after 8th December for the Christmas masses.

For any who feel able to attend Sunday Mass only if socially distanced seating is provided, there is a designated area reserved at the 6pm Mass, without prior booking, on a first come, first served basis.

For Sunday Mass, people are asked to sign in with the stewards or to scan the NHS QR code on entering the church and to notify us if they test positive within a few days of being at mass. It is suggested that, before coming to Sunday Mass, people take a Lateral Flow Test.

We continue to ask you to wear masks if you are able to do so.

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. Please contact aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk if you are interested, a.s.a.p. **SYCAMORE** meets on Tuesday at 8pm on Zoom.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Though Children's Liturgy is suspended, we have now restored the Children's Corner, with resources, and there are resources at the main door too. Please make use of all this whilst children are with you in church. For those at home, there is SDC Children's Liturgy Resource. Go to this site and select the date:

<http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/>

[Our Work](#)

[Donate](#)

[Get involved](#)

Sign up to our Advent Calendar

NOV
28

NOV
29

NOV
30

Advent is just one week away, and we'd like to invite you to join us as we seek to draw closer to God and our global family, during this meaningful but often busy time.

Each day, in our Advent Calendar, we will be sharing Bible reflections, stories of our global neighbours, prayers and practical ideas for action, as we create a space to prepare for the coming of Christ. The calendar is live now if you'd like to begin to explore the resource.

Join us on this journey by signing up now for our Advent Calendar email reminders.

[Sign up now](#)

Catherine Gorman
CAFOD Theology Team

CANCELLED WEEKDAY MASSES

Please note that there is no Mass at St Mary's on Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th, and Friday 26th November. Also there will be no Mass on Tuesday 30th November. Apologies for the disruption of the routine.

CATHOLIC NETWORK

What was formerly 'the Universe', the most popular Catholic Newspaper, is no more. Instead there is a free on-line Catholic publication.

<http://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk/>

ST AMAND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Amand's Catholic Primary School, East Hendred - your local Catholic primary school, where 'pupils enter with excitement and leave smiling...staff, parents and pupils are part of a loving family' OFSTED Report, September 2019

St Amand's School has had a very busy and fruitful start to the academic year 2021-22. We have been engaging with the COP 26 meetings and reflecting on how as a school community we can take better care of our world and treasure God's Creation. We enjoyed dressing up as Saints for a Light Festival and Bonfire which was well attended by many families. RISE Theatre will spend a day with us next week thinking about God's world. Soon we will be preparing for Advent and the ever-popular KS1 Nativity and the KS2 Carol Concert. We also had a visit from a Gold Medallist, Erin Kennedy, Paralympian and former pupil of St Amand's school.

St Amand's has places available for children in various year groups and if your child will be starting Reception in September 2022 please visit our friendly school to see how much a Catholic education has to offer. If you would like to know more please contact the Headteacher Mrs Ellery on [01235 833342](tel:01235833342)

Our website: www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk
or email office.3855@st-amands.oxon.sch.uk

Follow us on Twitter @StAmandPrimary or
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/St-Aminds-Catholic-Primary-School-104890787965526>

CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 21st November there were 190 hits from 60 unique viewers, with 110 on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 47 machines were in the UK and 13 in the rest of the world.

SYNOD 2021-2023

During October, the Holy Father launched a three-year consultation process with the whole Church. There are three stages. Between now and the end of April 2022, parishes are asked to produce a report to send to the diocese. These will be conflated nationally and, from September 2022 to March 2023, there will be continent-wide reflections throughout the world. Finally in October 2023, the Synod of Bishops will meet in Rome to produce a report for the Pope. Synods of Bishops are not new, nor are deliberations of Bishops' Conferences. What is new is that every parish is asking people and groups to reflect on 'What changes need to be made – in myself, in our parish, in the Diocese, to make the Church's mission today more vibrant and effective?' We shall co-ordinate our parish response via individuals and accredited groups through the Parish Pastoral Council and the St Patrick's Pastoral Committee. More soon. Meanwhile, comments and suggestions to Fr Andrew or to John Carpenter.

E-NEWS FROM THE BISHOP

Earlier this week we sent out the diocesan E-News for the second time. It is issued every Tuesday and sent to Parish Priests. No one has complained about this further intrusion. If they do, we shall have to think again. It may help others if you quietly disregard it rather than asking to be unsubscribed. There is no easy way of sending it on to some but not others.

E-MAILS, WEBSITE, AND FACEBOOK

Last minute changes are sometimes unavoidable and these are communicated by e-mail to the Bulletin list. Anyone may join the Bulletin list - contact hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk – and particular care should be taken of those who have no access to e-mail.

See our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

TAKE SOME REFLECTIVE TIME THIS ADVENT



Why not take some time away from it all and escape into the beautiful surroundings of Boarshill on the outskirts of Oxford. Take some reflective time this Advent and join us on this retreat, away from it all and spend time to centre your life and prepare for Advent.

Join us on a weekend retreat and let Fr Matt Blake take you through experiencing friendship through prayer. Take time out of your busy lives and become centred in Christ.

[ENROL NOW](#)



CONNECT WITH US ONLINE AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA



GIVING

CHARITY: AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need is appealing for funds to help the suffering Church in Syria. The situation is desperate, and they are asking for donations. Contact 0345 646 0110 or www.acnuk.org/sy21donate

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

GIVING TO 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

Please let us know (if you are a UK Taxpayer) if you are happy for us to claim Gift Aid. At the start of the tax year we need anybody in Gift Aid to let us know if they are no longer taxpayers. In that case we should not make a claim.

Donations to the parish: www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

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

Parish Priest:

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Office:

hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk



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meals

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Give until 31 January 2022 and your donation will be doubled by a group of generous supporters, up to £1.6 million – meaning we can reach even more hungry children with school meals.



Gbenda and Miatta



REGULAR
GIFTS
DOUBLED

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Advent Sunday
(Year C)
28th November 2021**

**Antiphons,
Prayers and
Readings**

Advent Wreath I

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

Entrance Antiphon

Ad te levavi

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

Cf Ps 24:1-3

Collect

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

First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16 (RSV)

¹⁴ 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

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Psalm 25: 4-5, 8-9, 10, 14 R/ 1

R/ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

O Lord, make me know your ways.
Teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth, and teach me;
for you are the God of my salvation. **R/**

Good and upright is the Lord;
he shows the way to sinners.
He guides the humble in right judgment;
to the humble he teaches his way. **R/**

All the Lord's paths are mercy and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and commands.
The Lord's secret is for those who fear him;
to them he reveals his covenant. **R/**

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 4:2 (RSV)

¹² May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you, ¹³ so that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. ⁴ Finally, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

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

Gospel

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 (RSV)

Jesus said to his disciples: ²⁵ 'And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near....³⁴ 'But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; ³⁵ for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man.'

Offertory Hymn

Come, thou long-expected Jesus (*see below*)

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface*(I De Adventu: De duobus adventibus Christi)*

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For he assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy &c.

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 if 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*Dominus dabit benignitatem*

The Lord will bestow his bounty and our earth shall yield its increase. *Ps 84:13*

Post Communion Hymn Lo! He comes with clouds (*see below*)

Prayer after Communion

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

Alma Redemptoris Mater

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

Scripture Reading (for the First Week of Advent)

Monday	Isaiah 2:1-5	Matthew 8:5-11
Tuesday	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24
Wednesday	Isaiah 25:6-10	Matthew 15:29-37
Thursday	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 7:21, 24-27
Friday	Isaiah 29:17-24	Matthew 9:27-31
Saturday	Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26	Matthew 9:35 – 10:1, 6-8
Advent 2 C	Baruch 5:1-9	
	Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11	Luke 3:1-6

HYMNS FOR ADVENT SUNDAY

OFFERTORY

COME, THOU long expected
Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release
us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley
(tune: *Cross of Jesus*)

POST COMMUNION

LO! HE comes with clouds
descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints
attending
Swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluya!
Alleluya!
Alleluya!
God appears, on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at nought and sold
him,
Pierced and nailed him to the
tree,
Deeply wailing
Deeply wailing
Deeply wailing
Shall the true Messiah see.

Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,
High on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and
glory:
Claim the kingdom for thine own:
O come quickly!
O come quickly!
O come quickly!
Alleluya! Come, Lord, come!

Charles Wesley
(tune: *Helmsley*)

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

Advent Week 1

Monday in the First Week of Advent

29th November

Collect for Advent 1

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

Reading

Isaiah 2:1-5 (RSV)

The Future House of God

2 The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,

3 and many peoples shall come, and say:
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations,

and shall decide for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

⁵ O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD.

Reflection

WE BEGIN the midweek readings for Advent with the vision of Isaiah that Mount Zion (Jerusalem) should become a focus for the whole world, with all nations looking towards the house of the Lord, set on the highest of mountains, a place of peace, that is wholesomeness as well as a place where there is no strife. It is a place where the instruments of war are turned into the tools of a prosperous agricultural economy. For Christians, this vision speaks of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the End-Time events are the Second Coming of the Messiah, the Christ, and the Last Judgment. This Second Coming – Second Advent - will bring about a new heaven and a new earth and the end of war. The vision is of everyone walking with the House of Jacob in the light of the Lord.

St Andrew, Apostle

Tuesday 30th November

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

Collect for St Andrew's Day

WE HUMBLY implore your majesty, O Lord, that, just as the blessed Apostle Andrew was for your Church a preacher and pastor, so he may be for us a constant intercessor before you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reading

Romans 10:9-18

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

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. ¹¹ The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. ¹³ For, 'every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'

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

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

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

Reflection

TODAY'S First Reading is taken from a discussion by St Paul of whether Israelites, relying on the Jewish Law, can be saved. His view is that everyone – Jew and Gentile – needs only call upon the name of the Lord

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

Tuesday in the First Week of Advent

The readings prescribed for Mass today are as for St Andrew's Day but the following reading from Isaiah is recommended for private study.

Reading

Isaiah 11:1-10

The Peaceful Kingdom

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

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

³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;

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

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

⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,

and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall feed;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.

Reflection

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

Wednesday in the First Week of Advent

1st December

St Edmund Campion, Martyr

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

Collect

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

Reading

Isaiah 25:6-10

The Feast on the Holy Mountain

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

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

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

Reflection

THE VISION of the day of the Lord and the feast on the Holy Mountain paints a picture starkly contrasting with the subsistence economy in which most people lived in the ancient world. Food was meagre and scarce and the vision of feasting, 'fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined', would be very enticing. As a sign of God's greatness, this feast is to be open to people of every nation – the veil having been pulled aside. The day of salvation and the overcoming of death marks the victory of the Hebrew God over the Canaanite god of the underworld, Mot, whose Hebrew name means 'Death'. Overcoming death implies the triumph of fertility and, with it, bountiful harvest. It is in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 that St Paul takes the phrase 'He will swallow up death for ever' in verse 8 to mean the relevance of the Resurrection to human life. The phrase 'wipe away tears from all faces', also in verse 8, is also used in the Book of Revelation (7:17). Similarly, the feast on the Holy Mountain links us well to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, the final vision of Heaven in Revelation and the meal of which we receive a foretaste at Mass.

Thursday in the First Week of Advent

2nd December

Reading

Isaiah 26:1-6

The Song of the Redeemed

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

- 'We have a strong city;
he sets up salvation
as walls and bulwarks.
- ² Open the gates,
that the righteous nation which keeps faith
may enter in.
- ³ You keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.
- ⁴ Trust in the LORD for ever,
for the LORD GOD
is an everlasting rock.
- ⁵ For he has brought low

the inhabitants of the height,
the lofty city.
He lays it low, lays it low to the ground,
casts it to the dust.
6 The foot tramples it,
the feet of the poor,
the steps of the needy.'

Reflection

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

Friday in the First Week of Advent

3rd December

St Francis Xavier

ST FRANCIS XAVIER SJ (1506-1552) was born in Spain and studied in Paris, where he became a founding member of the Society of Jesus. He travelled to India, Borneo, Indonesia, and Japan, and died of fever on Shangchuan Island, en route to China.

Collect for St Francis Xavier

GRANT us, we pray, O Lord our God, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy the author of all that is good. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reading

Isaiah 29:17-24

The Day the eyes of the blind will see

- ¹⁷ Is it not yet a very little while
until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?
- ¹⁸ In that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book,
and out of their gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind shall see.
- ¹⁹ The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,
and the poor among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.
- ²⁰ For the ruthless shall come to nought and the scoffer cease,
and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off,
- ²¹ who by a word make a man out to be an offender,
and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate,
and with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right.
- ²² Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the
house of Jacob:
- 'Jacob shall no more be ashamed,
no more shall his face grow pale.
- ²³ For when he sees his children,
the work of my hands, in his midst,
they will sanctify my name;
they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.
- ²⁴ And those who err in spirit will come to understanding,
and those who murmur will accept instruction.'

Reflection

WE ARE in a discussion about Jerusalem's judgment and salvation and we continue to focus on the Day of the Lord, a day when all will be transformed. The deaf will hear and the blind will see, and we are including here both spiritual deafness and spiritual blindness. The meek and the poor will find their joy in the Lord. Some of those who go astray will learn to improve their ways and some of the grumblers will learn to look at things differently. Evil-doers however will have no place. In this company of the redeemed, God's name shall be declared holy and his will

shall be done. We are seeing here not only wholesale moral and spiritual improvement but an end to economic injustice and misery.

Saturday in the First Week of Advent

4rd December

Reading

Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26

The LORD will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry

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

Reflection

TODAY'S reading is seen by the Church as a prophecy: it is Jesus who will be the promised 'Teacher' and who will show himself to be the LORD as he goes about preaching and teaching, blessing and healing.