

**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

11th – 17th September 2022



Queen Elizabeth II 1952-2022

The Legacy of Queen Elizabeth II

Fr Andrew writes:

IT IS not for me to add to the enormous number of words already written in appreciation of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Like most of her subjects, I saw her in the flesh only a few times – at the Royal Maundy services in Southwell Minster and Canterbury Cathedral and at the opening of the General Synod of the Church of England in 1990 and 1995. Like most of her subjects I was never close enough to speak to her: I am ashamed that at a couple of Buckingham Palace Garden Parties I was in the tea-tent when the Royal Family proceeded through the garden. What, I believe, is her legacy, and one which Catholics especially should safeguard and promote, was the centrality of her Christian Faith. It is noticeable that she proclaimed that Faith on several occasions, practised it in public, and clearly lived by its light. Our very secular world tries to ignore this. For example, the Archbishop of Canterbury's tribute when she died was read out on television but shortened on the BBC website to omit overly religious language. Noticeably politicians and others mostly speak of 'thoughts' rather than 'prayers'.

Maintaining this legacy – witnessing to the Christian Faith and to Christian values – is an urgent task for the Church in the coming years. We need to pray for His Majesty the King and for the Royal Family and we need to draw attention to and uphold the strong and continuing deposit of Faith amidst our pluriform society. May Elizabeth our Queen rest in peace.

WEEK 24 YEAR 2

11th – 17th September 2022

All masses live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendred
book for Sunday morning Mass: hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
St Mary's is usually open each day from 9am until late afternoon.

SUNDAY 24C			[Green]
11th September	9.15am	Children's Church (St Mary's Parish Rooms)	
	9.30am	Requiem Mass for HM The Queen	
	11.15am	Mass at St Patrick's	
	6pm	Holy Mass	Private Intention

WEEK 24 (Year 2)

Monday 12th	9.15am	The Most Holy Name of Mary Holy Mass FM Angela Mary Stillwell, relatives and friends 1951
Tuesday 13th	9.15am	St John Chrysostom, Bishop, Doctor of the Church Holy Mass FM Frances Eyston 1862
Wednesday 14th	9.15am	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross Holy Mass FM Frances Eyston 1862
Thursday 15th	9.15am	Our Lady of Sorrows School Mass St Amand's Intentions
Friday 16th	8.30am	SS Cornelius, Pope, & Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs Mass (Hendred House) FM Frances Eyston 1862
Saturday 17th		Our Lady St Mary on Saturday No Mass

SUNDAY 25C			[Green]
18th September	9.15am	Children's Church (St Mary's Parish Rooms)	
	9.30am	Parish Mass	Pro populo
	11.15am	Mass at St Patrick's	
	6pm	Holy Mass	Private Intention

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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

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

PLANNED GIVING OFFICER FOR THE DIOCESE

Permanent, Full time, 35 hours per week

Based in St Edmund's House, Bishop Crispian Way, Portsmouth PO1 3QA

Salary: £25,000 – £30,000 per annum depending on skills and experience.

Do you wish to use your experience and expertise in implementing fundraising initiatives to develop and deliver innovative stewardship programmes across our Diocese? If so, then we have a fantastic opportunity for you.

The Planned Giving Officer will work alongside parishes, programmes and projects to secure key funding revenue, overseeing a portfolio of fundraising tools including digital giving (contactless and online), stewardship resources and legacy bequests.

You will be joining a busy and forward-thinking Fundraising Team, providing support to a network of employees and volunteers at various levels. We are looking for a talented individual who is passionate about supporting transformational change across the local community. You will have fundraising experience and be confident operating independently with appropriate support, as well as working closely with important external and internal stakeholders.

At a time of ambitious organisational growth, this is a brilliant opportunity for someone to grow their skills and knowledge, and develop their career in the charity sector. We are entering a new and ambitious ten-year strategy, and you will have the opportunity to spend a significant part of your time working on a major fundraising campaign and receive first-class career support from a range of external partners who are leaders in their field.

For full job description and details of how to apply please contact|:

Recruitment@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

If you would like a confidential discussion about the role please contact:

Chris Smith – Director of Communications and Fundraising

csmith@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk 023 9421 6514

Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Wednesday 28th September 2022

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



SEPTEMBER IS THE MONTH OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

THE HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR SEPTEMBER

We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTIONS

Sunday 11 th	Staff, Pupils, Governors, Parents, & Chaplains in our Catholic Primary & Secondary Schools
Monday 12 th	Shrines of Our Lady in these Islands
Tuesday 13 th	Parish of St Joseph, Newbury
Wednesday 14 th	Diocesan Refugee Response Group
Thursday 15 th	Community of St Patrick, Sandown
Friday 16 th	Sisters of Our Lady of Pity
Saturday 17 th	Franciscans in the Diocese; Secular Franciscans

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 11th- 17th September: Georgina Atkinson, Agnes Froud, Eddie Kelly, Vincenzo Fosella, Michael Higgins, Wilfrid Mulford, James Davies, George Joseph Castle, John Henry Savile, Eileen Harper, Bob Ryan.

Reflection – *Our Lady of Sorrows*

OUR LADY OF SORROWS (*Beata Maria Virgo Perdolens*), Our Lady of Dolours, the Sorrowful Mother, the Mother of Sorrows (*Mater Dolorosa*), Our Lady of Piety, Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, and [*Mater Dolorosa*](#), refer to a key subject for art and devotion.

Traditionally, the Seven Sorrows are:

1. The [Prophecy of Simeon](#) as found in Luke 2
2. The [Flight into Egypt](#) from Matthew 2
3. The [Loss of the Child Jesus](#) in the [Temple of Jerusalem](#), Lk 2
4. [Mary's meeting Jesus](#) on the [Via Dolorosa](#), the [Fourth station of the Cross](#);
5. The [Crucifixion of Jesus](#) on [Mount Calvary](#)
6. Jesus is [Taken Down from the Cross](#).
7. The [Burial of Jesus](#) by [Joseph of Arimathea](#)

The Virgin Mary is portrayed sorrowful and in tears, with one or seven long knives ([daggers](#)) piercing her. Devotional prayers that consist of [meditation](#) began to elaborate on her Seven Sorrows based on the prophecy of [Simeon](#). Common examples of piety under this title are the [Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows](#), [the Seven Principal Dolours of the Blessed Virgin](#), the [Novena in Honour of the Seven Sorrows of Mary](#), and more recently, [Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary](#).

The feast of Our Lady of Sorrows is liturgically celebrated every 15th September, while a feast, the [Friday of Sorrows](#) is observed in some [Catholic countries](#). In the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, the Friday before Palm Sunday is celebrated as St Mary in Passiontide.

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD



Join us to find out more about CAFOD's World Food Crisis Appeal

On **Saturday (17th September)** there is a CAFOD meeting at St Bede's church hall from 10:30am to 12 noon to hear from Ibrahim Njuguna CAFOD's Surge Country Representative for Africa about the World Food Crisis and the difficulties facing communities in East Africa. Please book your place for either meeting by contacting Jo Lewry on portsmouth@cafod.org.uk or call 07710 094447.

CLOSER TO CHRIST CAMPAIGN

The next stage of the Funding Campaign, Closer to Christ, in the parish takes place today, Sunday, 11th September.

We have approached a selection of people in advance of the launch so that the amount at the launch is already 60% of the target. For further details, see below, for a hyperlink to a table of parishes and data. MBloomer@ccsfundraising.com

In this next stage we are inviting everyone who can to sign up for one of two Zoom meetings. 14th September at 11am or 15th September at 7.30pm. Each meeting will last a maximum of 30 minutes. Please do sign up for one or other meeting. If you cannot do either, let Fr Andrew know and he will make a special arrangement for you.

MISSIONARY COMMUNITIES

The Bishop unveils a ten-year Mission Plan: *You Shall Be My Witnesses*: <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/communications/news/enews/>

This plan will affect everyone in the diocese. Under the plan, between July 2023 and December 2027 parishes will be reorganised and estate rationalised. Our new 'Missionary Community' or 'Parish' will be an amalgamation of Abingdon, Buckland and Faringdon, Didcot and Wallingford; Hendred, Hinksey, Wantage and Lambourn. Teams of clergy will serve each 'Parish'.



Welcome to the latest edition of the ***Closer to Christ*** Campaign Weekly Newsletter.

This week saw the first phase begin in the final parish that makes up Group 2 and a wonderful milestone was also achieved - over £1 million has now been received in cash for the Campaign priorities. You can find out more [here](#).

With every thanks,

Closer to Christ Campaign Team

CHILDREN.....

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Have a word with Veronica or Libby if you would like to help. We resume at 9.15am next Sunday, 11th September in St Mary's Parish Rooms.

PARENTS AND TODDLERS' GROUP

It would be great to enable and welcome a Parents' and Toddlers' Group and we now have a first-rate, air-conditioned environment for such a group. The advantage of such groups is that they more or less run themselves. If anyone is interested in such a venture, have a word with Fr Andrew.

.....YOUNG ADULTS

DAVE AND GEMMA

I have asked Dave and Gemma, a couple at St Mary's, who are marrying later this year, to head up and liaise our work with young adults. If you are interested in any of the things below – or other activities – have a word with them. They can be reached on davegem2022@gmail.com

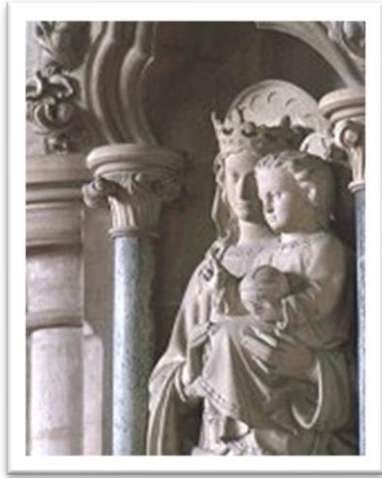
FLAME

Flame, the largest youth gathering of Catholics, is taking place at the OVO Arena, Wembley on Saturday 4th March 2023, with the theme 'Rise Up!' All young people, whether from the parish, at school (Year 9 or older), or at university are welcome. Loud music, bright lights, moments of stillness..... Any questions? Contact youth@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or phone 07780 221686.

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023

Those aged 16 or above by July 2023 are invited to join with like-minded young people from across the diocese to journey on pilgrimage to Lisbon for World Youth Day. This is a life-changing experience for all those who accept the invitation and this pilgrimage, led by Bishop Philip, is set to be the best one yet! But hurry, spaces are limited! Plans are in the early stages, but we will provide more information and details as soon as possible. For further information, see the posters in church, or please email wyd@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Twenty-Fourth Sunday in
Ordinary Time (C)
11th September 2022
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings**

Entrance Antiphon

Da pacem, Domine

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

Cf Sir 36:18

Collect

Look upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever

First Reading

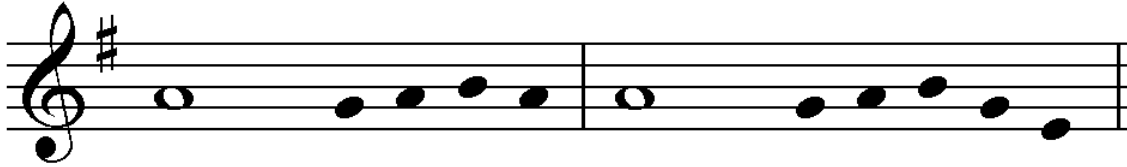
Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14 (RSV)

The LORD said to Moses, ‘Go down; for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”’ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation.’ But Moses begged the LORD his God, and said, ‘O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?... Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give

to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.” And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people.

Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19 R/Lk 15:18

Tone IV.4



R/ I *will* leave this place | and *go* to my fa-ther.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to ~
your *mer-ci-ful* love;
according to *your* great com-pas-sion
blot *out* my trans-gres-sions.
Wash me completely from my in-i-qui-ty, ~
and *cleanse* me from my sin. **R/**

Create a pure heart *for* me, O God;
renew a steadfast *spi-rit* with-in me.
Do not cast me away *from* your pre-sence;
take not your hol-y *spi-rit* from me. **R/**

O Lord, *o-pen* my lips
and my mouth *shall* pro-claim your praise.
My sacrifice to God, a *bro-ken* spi-rit,
a broken and humbled heart, O *God*, you will not spurn. **R/**

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Second Reading

1 Timothy 1:12-17 (RSV)

I thank him who has given me strength for this, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful by appointing me to his service, though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation



God in Christ was reconciling the world *to* him-self:
and he has entrusted to us the news that they *are* re - con - ciled.

Gospel

Lk 15:11-32 (RSV)

Jesus said, 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.'

Revised Standard Version Bible, Ignatius Edition, copyright © 2006, by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Prayer over the Offerings

Look with favour on our supplications, O Lord, and in your kindness accept these, your servants' offerings, that what each has offered to the honour of your Name, may serve the salvation of all. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface VIII

(De Ecclesia adunata ex unitate Trinitatis)

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, when your children were scattered afar by sin, through the Blood of your Son and the power of the Spirit, you gathered them again to yourself, that a people, formed as one by the unity of the Trinity, made the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, might, to the praise of your manifold wisdom, be manifest as the Church. And so, in company with the choirs of Angels, we praise you, and with joy we proclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

Communion Antiphon

Quam pretiosa est misericordia tua

How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.

cf Ps 36:8

Prayer after Communion

May the working of this heavenly gift, O Lord, we pray, take possession of our minds and bodies, so that its effects, and not our desires, may always prevail in us. Through Christ our Lord.

Salve Regina

Liturgical Hymns 597

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 towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Scripture Reading (Week 24 Year 2)

Monday	1 Corinthians 11:17-26, 33	Luke 7:1-10
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27-31	Luke 7:11-17
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13	Luke 7:31-35
Thursday	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Luke 7:36-50
Friday	1 Corinthians 15:12-20	Luke 8:1-3
Saturday	1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49	Luke 8:4-15
Sunday 25C	Amos 8:4-7	
	1 Timothy 2:1-8	Luke 16:1-13

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FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

12th - 17th September 2022 Week 24[ii]

OVERVIEW OF THE WEEK

FOR FOUR days this week we are able to stay with the First Letter to the Corinthians, a high-point of Pauline theology. On Wednesday there is an important feast of the Lord, Holy Cross Day, which has its own readings. For the sake of completeness, we also include here what would have been the reading for Wednesday had it been an ordinary day. After all, 1 Cor 13 is one of the 'purple passages' in the New Testament, often used at weddings.

It is important to notice the links St Paul makes in the First Letter to the Corinthians – the gathering of believers in Corinth, the gathering which is fed eucharistically on the Body of Christ, the gathering whose members become the Body of Christ. To see where St Paul takes all this we need the Saturday reading – which we do not normally include in our anthology. For convenience' sake, we include Saturday's reading, the first part of which is largely self-explanatory. The second part – about the first man, Adam, and the last Adam, Christ – is more technical, and reflection on that must be on another occasion.

Collect for Week 24

LOOK upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart. 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

Monday 12th September

The Most Holy Name of Mary

Reading

1 Cor 11:17-26, 33 (RSV)

The Lord's Supper

¹⁷ Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. ²¹ For when the time comes to eat, each of you proceeds to eat your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. ²² What! Do you not have households to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for^[a] you. Do this in remembrance of me.' ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes....³³ So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

Reflection

TO UNDERSTAND this account of the early Eucharist, we should perhaps bear in mind what St Paul has been describing in the first four chapters of the First Letter to the Corinthians, a community riven by factions, each claiming allegiance to different people. It may well be that some of this was about social class. The Early Church – much as today’s Church – brought together people of very different backgrounds – old and young, rich and poor, those solid in the faith and those new to it – and this can inevitably cause tensions. In first century Corinth, the Church would have met in the homes of the wealthy where a public space – a courtyard or dining room – would have easily accommodated fifty people. It seems that the rich probably gathered together for a formal meal, after which the poor were welcomed in for the Eucharist, a secondary consideration. St Paul thoroughly disapproves of this. All should meet together and, if people can’t all share a meal together, they should eat beforehand. Having established that it is the Eucharist, rather than the meal, which is of central importance, St Paul then gives us the first account we have – earlier than that in the Gospels – of the Eucharist. It is recognisable not least because these verses have been used and are used in the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass.

Tuesday 13th September

St John Chrysostom

Reading

1 Cor 12:12-14, 27-31 (RSV)

One Body with Many Members

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.....

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work powerful deeds? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But strive for the greater gifts.

Reflection

THE USE of 'body language' in modern society is pervasive: 'corporation' and 'incorporated' both build on the Latin stem *corpus*. We talk about 'governing bodies' and 'bodies of opinion'. Those who belong to 'bodies' are called 'members' – which, literally speaking, are parts of the human body. Almost certainly this language derives entirely from this chapter of the First Letter to the Corinthians where St Paul explores what it means to be 'the body of Christ'. It is worth looking up the verses omitted from today's reading. Very powerfully we are reminded that in 'the body' everything – that is everyone – has a function. Some bits seem more important than others. Some bits seem more private than others. But all the bits are necessary. It follows that the Church has diverse parts, different gifts and different callings. It was the distinct insight of St Thérèse of Lisieux that what St Paul goes on to talk about in Chapter 13 – the importance of Love – was her own calling. If, like her, we cannot for the life of us work out what particular calling we have in the work of the Church, we should do well to reflect with St Thérèse that it is Love which is at the heart of the Church and that is a calling in which we can all share.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Wednesday 14th September

The Feast nowadays is the celebration of the Cross, a symbol of Christ's sacrifice and his victory over death. There are two stories commemorated, part legend and part fact. 14th September commemorates the rescue of the relic of the True Cross in 629 after it had been captured by the Persians. It marks the original dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where the relics of the Cross were kept. A second feast, the Invention (or Finding) of the Holy Cross commemorated an earlier event: the discovery in 326 of the True Cross by Saint Helena, mother of Constantine, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It was then that the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre was built.

Collect

O GOD, who willed that your Only-begotten Son should undergo the Cross to save the human race: grant, we pray, that we, who have known his mystery on earth, may merit the grace of his redemption in heaven. 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

Numbers 21:4-9 (RSV)

The Bronze Serpent

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way. ⁵And the people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.' ⁶Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷And the people came to Moses, and said, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it

on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Reflection

TODAY’S reading, from the Book of Numbers is an ancient and rather primitive tale. During the nomadic journey from Egypt, the Israelites experienced discomfort and at various times drought, famine, and pestilence. These incidents are often interpreted as punishments from God, or at least opportunities to deepen faith and trust. The incident of the Bronze Serpent is the last of the ‘grumbling’ occasions. We’re on the last lap – the journey from the Red Sea, then going round Edom to get to the Promised Land. The people grumble about the food – people do – and are punished with a plague of snakes. The snakes are ‘seraph serpents’ – ‘seraph’ meaning ‘burning’. We find *seraphim* in Isaiah 14:29 and 30:6 as well as, famously, in Isaiah’s vision (Isaiah 6:2, 6), where they cry out the *Sanctus* (‘Holy, holy, holy’) that we use at Mass. Associated with these serpents is the burning coal to cleanse the prophet’s lips. They are winged and can fly and may be related to the hooded cobra, venerated in Egypt and part of the Pharaoh’s headdress. God instructs Moses to deal with this outbreak with a form of magical healing: mounting a bronze serpent on a pole. Those who look at it will escape death and the deadly seraph becomes an instrument of healing. We can find references to this ambiguous animal elsewhere in the Old Testament. The snake in Genesis 3 is a symbol of the devil (see Wis 2:24). Moses’ own staff was turned into a serpent (Ex 4:3; 7:15). In Hezekiah’s reforms in the eighth century BC (2 Kings 18:4), a bronze serpent is removed from the Temple, because it had become a symbol of idolatry. Our instinctive response – with Hezekiah – is to see the Bronze Serpent as an idol, surely no different from the Golden Calf, which brought disaster upon the people (Ex 32). There are two important differences, however. First, the Bronze Serpent is God’s remedy for the plague and not the people rebelling against God and his commandments. Second, the Bronze Serpent is mentioned by Jesus (Jn 3:14-15) as a pre-figuring, a foreshadowing, of the salvation brought about by the Holy Cross. Jesus is lifted up and nailed to a cross much as Moses sets a bronze serpent on a pole.

Reading for Wednesday of Week 24

Supplanted this year by the Feast of the Holy Cross

Reading

1 Cor 12:31-13:13 (RSV)

The Gift of Love

And I will show you a still more excellent way. **13** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; **5** it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. **7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. **9** For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; **10** but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. **11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. **13** So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Reflection

THE THREE theological virtues – Faith, Hope, and Charity – are extolled by St Paul but the greatest of these is Charity. Surely the most famous passage in St Paul's writings is the hymn to Love, 1 Corinthians 13. This passage is very often the 'go to' reading at weddings and funerals, not just because of the primacy of love amongst the virtues, but because the sentiments in this hymn are expressed so beautifully. Yet we need to be careful of the word 'love'. Greek, like English, has more than one word for 'love'. An older word in English is 'charity' but a phrase like 'as cold as charity' points to a certain dutifulness about 'charity', which may not

involve warm feelings. If we think of two Greek words – *eros* and *agape* – we can make some valuable distinctions. *Eros* would describe what lovers feel at the garden gate. *Agape* would describe the love a parent has for a child or the kind of deep friendship which is usually referred to as 'Platonic love'. In short, 'love' in 1 Corinthians is not hearts and flowers but the sacrificial commitment of two people to one another and the covenant of love between God and Man. There is no doubt that the love of God, shown by his gift to us of Christ his only-begotten Son, reveals new depths of love – depths which can never be plumbed – but that love is partly unveiled for us in the Old Testament. Think of passages like Hosea 11:1: 'When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.' The God of Israel, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a God of Love.

Thursday 15th September

Our Lady of Sorrows

This memorial originally referred to 'the Seven Dolours (or Sorrows) of Mary', associated with the events of Good Friday. Shadowing the physical pain and torture experienced by the Saviour was Mary's psychological pain and turmoil. This was as foretold at Candlemas by Simeon (Luke 2:34-35):

**Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
and for a sign that is spoken against
³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also),
that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.**

Collect

O GOD, who willed that, when your Son was lifted high on the Cross, his Mother should stand close by and share his suffering: grant that your Church, participating with the Virgin Mary in the Passion of Christ, may merit a share in his Resurrection, Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reading

1 Cor 15:1-11 (RSV)

The Resurrection of Christ

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

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Reflection

IT WAS nearly a week ago – when we were looking at 1 Corinthians 9 – that we thought about St Paul’s unique calling to be an apostle. He was a witness of the Risen Christ – an essential part of being an apostle – and yet the Lord whom he witnessed was the Risen and Ascended Lord, revealing himself not in his resurrection body but in a vision on the Damascus Road. In a sense, St Paul is a ‘second class apostle’, therefore, and he certainly felt that rather keenly. Hence his manifesto in today’s reading. Tradition means ‘handing on’ or ‘receiving’ and so St Paul tells us what was handed on to him. We then have testimony to a series of appearances – to Peter, to the Twelve (including, presumably, Matthias in place of Judas Iscariot), to five hundred brethren, to James and all the apostles – and then (better late than never) to Paul, who calls himself ‘the least of the apostles’. His reference ‘as to one untimely born’ acknowledges something of the problem of timing but his feeling that he is ‘the least of the apostles’ is not so much that but the continuing regret that, before his conversion, he persecuted the Church and was

instrumental in some being imprisoned or worse. As Paul gives an account of the tradition received, he calls this 'the Gospel which [the Corinthians] received, in which [they] stand, by which [they] are saved'. The passage is useful to us, two thousand years later, precisely because it is the Gospel we too have received, the Gospel in which we stand, and the Gospel by which we are saved. We learn from the very beginning of Christian Mission the importance of tradition – what is received and what is handed on – and we are reminded that it is our urgent task to not only receive the Gospel but to hand it on to our family and friends. It is not our job to convince anyone of anything – as St Paul says elsewhere, it is 'neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth' (1 Cor 3:7).

Friday 16th September

SS Cornelius and Cyprian

Reading

1 Cor 15:12-20 (RSV)

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴ if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied. ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Reflection

1 CORINTHIANS 15 is a lengthy and systematic demonstration of the power of the Gospel and in some 58 verses sets out the Christian hope in the resurrection. Clearly some of the Corinthians did not believe in the

Resurrection of Christ. They may have believed in some sort of resuscitation of Jesus but not the resurrection. But, says Paul, if Christ is not raised, nor can the dead be raised. And if the dead cannot be raised, then Christ has not been raised. The Gospel rests on the basic fact of the resurrection of Christ, without which faith is futile, and those who have died are well and truly dead. If the Gospel hope were for this life only, then that would be a waste of time and those who devote themselves to the Faith are more to be pitied than anyone else.

Saturday 17th September

Reading

1 Cor 15:35-37, 42-49 (RSV)

The Resurrection Body

³⁵ But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' ³⁶ You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. [³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.]

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.