

**DEANERY OF ST EDMUND CAMPION ENGLISH MARTYRS—**

**VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE PASTORAL AREA**

[www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

[www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk)

# **East Hendred Catholic Parish**

## **Fifth Week of Lent**

**21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021**





## Reflection – Passiontide

**T**HOUGH Passiontide has apparently disappeared from our Calendar, much of it remains in the liturgy. Crosses and statues are removed or veiled from the Fifth Sunday of Lent, and the texts of the Office, and the Preface and Propers at Mass are redolent of the Passion. The name for Palm Sunday is now 'Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord'. In short, Passiontide is still there to be observed, and we do well to make good use not only of Holy Week but of the fortnight of Passiontide. My rule of thumb has always been to try to make the first week a week for 'the head', a time for thinking about doctrine and theology, and the second week a week for 'the heart', a time for living through the emotions of the story.

Doctrine and theology present us with the chance to think about such ideas as atonement, beauty, evil, goodness, humility, love, obedience, sacrifice, satisfaction, service, sonship, suffering, ugliness. These are all matters on which the Christian Faith – and Catholic teaching in particular – has much distinctive to teach. They are also matters about which, from our vantage point, the world at large has no better explanations to offer. The secular view – that these are partly accidents of evolution and partly stratagems devised by natural selection and the survival of the fittest – barely skims the surface of our understanding. That is not to say that Faith provides all the answers. One of the meanings of 'mystery' is 'sacrament' or 'sign': we should not assume that anything which is not understandable makes no sense. The Christian sacraments are not understandable but they are pregnant with meaning. So it is with such questions as 'why did Christ die for our sins?'; 'did he have to die for our sins?'; 'in what way could/did the death of Christ bring about at-one-ment, make us right with God?'. We can go on and ask about the problem of evil and suffering and, moreover, the problem of good. These problems cannot be solved or explained but that does not render everything meaningless. Can beauty, goodness, or love ever be thought meaningless?

Passiontide gives us a week to think about such matters – as they press upon us – and a week to relive the story.

*Fr Andrew*

### CONTACT DETAILS

**Fr Andrew:** 01235 835038 or 07976 437979  
[aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

# 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021

All masses live-streamed [www.churchservices.tv/easthendred](http://www.churchservices.tv/easthendred)

**Church open from 9am to late afternoon each day**

<b>Sunday</b> <b>21<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b> ( <i>Year B</i> ) <b>9.30am</b> <b>6pm</b>	<i>[Purple]</i> <b>Parish Mass</b> [ <i>please book</i> ] <b>Holy Mass</b> [ <i>please book</i> ]
<b>Monday</b> <b>22<sup>nd</sup> March</b>	<i>Of the Fifth Week of Lent</i> <b>9.15am</b> 6pm	<i>[Purple]</i> <b>Holy Mass</b> In Thanksgiving for Kristina's recovery (Julie Lazarus) Vespers <i>(Facebook)</i>
<b>Tuesday</b> <b>23<sup>rd</sup> March</b>	<i>Of the Fifth Week of Lent</i> <b>9.15am</b> 6pm 7.30pm	<b>Day of National Reflection</b> <b>Holy Mass</b> <i>[Purple]</i> RIP Geraldine (Kitty) Beegan and Harry Whitebloom Vespers <i>(Facebook)</i> 'The God Who Speaks' <i>(Zoom)</i> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4315430307?pwd=cDloZzNnRzM4SUtUM2RsbFZmZ0FRdz09;">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4315430307?pwd=cDloZzNnRzM4SUtUM2RsbFZmZ0FRdz09;</a>
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>24<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<i>Of the Fifth Week of Lent</i> <b>9.15am</b> 6pm	<i>[Purple]</i> <b>Holy Mass</b> Vespers <i>(Facebook)</i>
<b>Thursday</b> <b>25<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD</b> 9am <b>10am</b> 6pm	<i>[White]</i> Morning Prayer & Exposition <b>School Mass</b> Vespers <i>(Facebook)</i>
<b>Friday</b> <b>26<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<i>Of the Fifth Week of Lent</i> 9am <b>9.15am</b> 5pm	<i>[Purple]</i> Morning Prayer <b>Holy Mass</b> Ecumenical Evensong <i>(Facebook)</i> <i>at Holy Trinity, Ardington</i>
		<a href="https://m.facebook.com/pages/category/Church/Benefice-of-Wantage-Downs-109686177340271/">https://m.facebook.com/pages/category/Church/Benefice-of-Wantage-Downs-109686177340271/</a>
<b>Saturday</b> <b>27<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<i>Of the Fifth Week of Lent</i> <b>No Mass</b>	
<b>Sunday</b> <b>28<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>PALM SUNDAY</b> ( <i>Year B</i> ) <b>9.30am</b> <b>6pm</b>	<i>[Red]</i> <b>Ceremonies &amp; Parish Mass</b> <i>[please book]</i> <b>Holy Mass</b> [ <i>please book</i> ]
<b>Confessions:</b>	<i>after Mass or by arrangement</i>	

# Booking for Holy Week & Easter

**DEMAND** for these services is high and the Standing Committee met last Wednesday to discuss how to meet expectations. There was no general support for relaxing the social distancing regulation further at this stage but agreement on a series of things.

- There will be two masses on Palm Sunday (9.30am and 6pm) and on Easter Sunday (9.30am and 11.15am).
- There will also be two very similar liturgies on Good Friday: the Liturgy of the Cross at 12 noon and the Afternoon Liturgy at 3pm. Holy Communion will be available at both.
- Preference will be given on Easter Sunday at 9.30am to those who have not attended at the Easter Vigil.
- Holy Communion will be available at the Church Door at 12 noon after the second Easter morning Mass. This will be for those who have watched on Church Services TV.
- Due priority will be given to those who have no means of booking electronically and/or no means of watching Church Services TV.

We worked hard at Christmas to meet people's needs and we hope to achieve the same level of satisfaction with the Easter liturgies.

The Google Poll sent out, which you filled in, was to establish interest. It was not the booking process.

**SO PLEASE FILL IN THE NEW BOOKING FORM, making choices as required. The Deadline is Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March at 12 noon. After that, places will be allocated.**

**Thank you for your help.**

*Fr Andrew*

# HOLY WEEK & EASTER

**28<sup>th</sup> March - 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

All masses live-streamed [www.churchservices.tv/easthended](http://www.churchservices.tv/easthended)

**Church open from 9am each day**

<b>Sunday</b> <b>28<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>PALM SUNDAY</b> ( <i>Year B</i> ) <b>9.30am</b> Ceremonies & Parish Mass <i>please book:</i> <a href="mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk">hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</a> <b>6pm</b> Holy Mass [ <i>please book</i> ]	[Red]
<b>Monday</b> <b>29<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<i>Monday in Holy Week</i> <b>9.15am</b> Holy Mass 6pm Vespers	[Purple] (Facebook)
<b>Tuesday</b> <b>30<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<i>Tuesday in Holy Week</i> <b>9.15am</b> Holy Mass 6pm Vespers	[Purple] (Facebook)
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<i>Wednesday in Holy Week</i> <b>9.15am</b> School Mass 6pm Vespers	[Purple] (Facebook)
<b>Thursday</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> April</b>	<i>Thursday in Holy Week</i> 9am Morning Prayer	[Purple]

## EASTER TRIDUUM

<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> April</b>	<b>8pm</b> Mass of the Lord's Supper <i>please book:</i> <a href="mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk">hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</a>	[White]
<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> April</b>	<i>Day of Fasting and Abstinence</i> 9am Morning Prayer <b>12 noon</b> Liturgy of the Cross <b>3pm</b> Afternoon Liturgy <i>please book:</i> <a href="mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk">hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</a>	
<b>HOLY SATURDAY</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> April</b>	9am Morning Prayer	
<b>EASTER EVE</b>	<b>8pm</b> Easter Vigil in the Holy Night <i>please book:</i> <a href="mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk">hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</a>	
<b>EASTER SUNDAY</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>9.30am</b> Solemn Mass <b>11.15am</b> Holy Mass ( <i>St Mary's</i> ) <i>please book (all masses):</i> <a href="mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk">hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</a> <b>Evening</b> No Mass	[Gold]

**Confessions:** Monday to Saturday: *after Mass or Morning Prayer*

# East Hendred Catholic Parish

## NOTICEBOARD

### DAY OF REFLECTION

**National Day of Reflection on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The Bishops have asked Catholics to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. As well as 9.15am Mass, St Mary's will be open for prayer all day. Drop by and light a candle.**

### PALM SUNDAY AND EASTER SUNDAY

Despite an earlier plan, Holy Mass on Palm Sunday will be at 9.30am and 6pm. There will be no outdoor Procession of Palms. On Easter Sunday the two masses will be at 9.30am and 11.15am. There will be no Mass on Easter Sunday evening.

### BOOKING FOR MASS

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

### ST MARY'S OPENING

9am most days until late afternoon. Come along to Mass on weekdays. . Masks and social distancing required. Book for Sunday Mass before 12 noon on Fridays [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) After that, contact Fr Andrew on 01235 835038 or [aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) Space limited. Book early.

### ST MARY'S ON LIVE-STREAM

Last Sunday (14<sup>th</sup> March) 389 people looked in from 203 addresses, with 116 staying long enough to take part in the Mass. Homes with more than one viewer and browsers explain the largest figure. 137 UK, 48 Ireland, 18 elsewhere.

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

Bishop Philip invites you to join him online every Thursday 7.30 to 8.30 pm: <https://www.portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk/live-mass.php>

### LENTEN RETREAT: 'FINDING HOPE IN SCRIPTURE' Monday at 7.30pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtc-2qrjkiGtU8vPFJea2ktvR5U0MZ1mrL>

### CHARITY

To help with supplying the Didcot Foodbank, contact Veronica Paget: [veronicapaget@hotmail.com](mailto:veronicapaget@hotmail.com) or leave suitable food outside her front door. [Jackymattam@btinternet.com](mailto:Jackymattam@btinternet.com) helps with the poor locally and items for her may be left outside the door of Cozens Farm inside plastic bags.

Does anyone have 5-6 years boy's clothes, 7-8 years boy's clothes and size 18 women's clothes? Also a 20 inch boy's bike in safe condition?

# FOR YOUR PRAYERS

## **HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION**

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

## **FIRST COMMUNION GROUP**

Pray for children beginning First Communion Preparation through St Amand's School: Felicity, Keeleigh, Elijah, Anna, Eamonn, Luca, Mia, Isobel, Julia, Stephen, Thomas. Pray also for their families and for the catechists: Helen Ellery, Ann-Marie Kershaw, Anna Loughlin.

## **THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED**

Baby Martha, John Castle, Petal Connell, Daniel Cuevas, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Sr Catherine, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Angus Clark, Karen Greig, Kitty Teasdale, Mary McNichol, Andrew Gunn, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol, Christine Robinson, Rose

## **THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED**

(recent) Bill Faupel; (Anniversaries) Week 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> March: Cecil Campbell, Josephine Clipperton, Albert Midwinter, Ernest Couling, William Carter, Winifred May Goodman, Claire Vaughan, Kathleen Ballard.

**GIVING: THE PARISH** BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT

**BANK DETAILS: PRCDTR East Hendred, St Mary**

**Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183**

**To arrange Gift Aid, contact :** [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

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A donation to the parish may be made on  
[www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk)

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## **Parish Administrators**

[hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) is monitored by the Parish Administrator and her Assistant.

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## **GOOD FRIDAY**

There is a collection for the Holy Places on Good Friday. The Bishops have asked us particularly to draw this to your attention this year. Money given supports such places as the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.



# CHILDREN'S PAGES

- (1) Have you tuned into '**Morning Prayer for Children**', 9am on Sundays? It's ten minutes on Church Services TV. Nobody will mind if you're still eating your Frosties or wearing your jim-jams. The-theme of today's Gospel at Mass is 'A Grain of Wheat'.
- (2) We have got some small **wooden craft crosses** which we have left in St Mary's porch for children to collect and decorate. They will help us celebrate 'Passiontide', the second half of Lent, when our thoughts move towards Holy Week. Help yourself!
- (3) **Special stuff for Sunday** 21<sup>st</sup> March, the Fifth Sunday in Lent follows on the next couple of pages.

Enjoy

*Fr Andrew*

YEAR B

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021

A Grain of Wheat

John 12:23-27

*Jesus said to his disciples. "The time has come for me to be glorified. Just as a grain of wheat must die to produce a harvest of many grains, so the Son of God must die so that many can live."*

*Jesus was troubled because he knew the time for him to die was fast approaching. "I could ask my heavenly father to stop this thing happening, but it was the very reason that I have come."*

Reflection

*Jesus felt troubled because he knew soon that Judas would betray him and that he would suffer and die on the cross. No one likes to suffer, and Jesus knew what was ahead of him. He must have felt afraid, but he did not try to avoid what was going to happen. Instead, he turned to his father and prayed for strength and courage.*

*Jesus used the image of the grains of wheat to try and explain what would happen to him. He wanted to understand that, like a seed's, his death was necessary, if new life was to be given to many. Jesus gave up his life dying on the cross so that he could have new and everlasting life, which we could share with him*

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus, you willingly gave up your life so that you could share your everlasting life with all of mankind. Thank you for your courage and love and for dying to save us all.*

*Amen*



Jeremiah 31:31-34  
 Psalm 50  
 Hebrews 5:7-9  
 John 12:26-30

# Speak, Lord



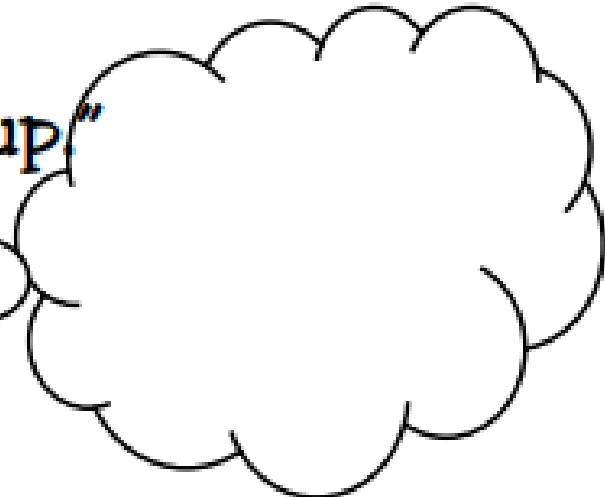
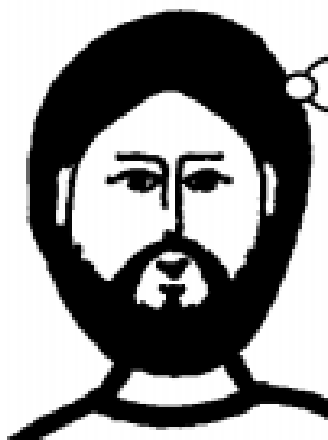
SUNDAY LITURGY FOR CHILDREN

Year B — 5th Sunday of Lent



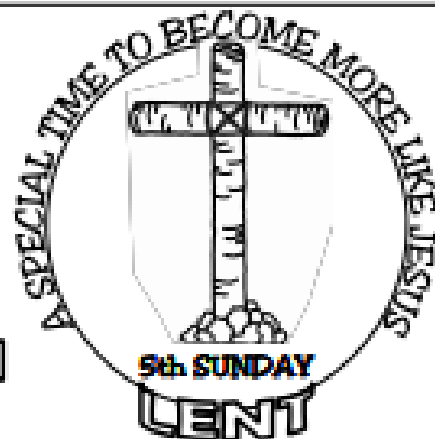
## JESUS KNEW HOW HE WAS GOING TO DIE ...

He said:  
 "I will be lifted up."

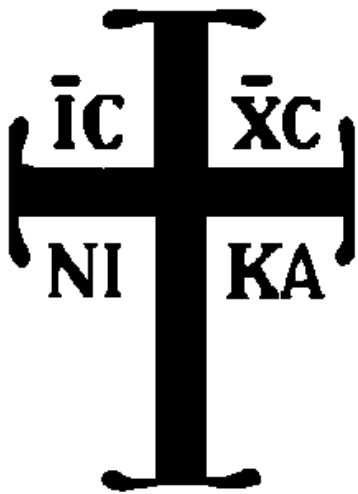


What was Jesus thinking of?  
 In the thought bubble draw a picture of how he was put to death.

TODAY is the  
**FIFTH**  
 SUNDAY  
 of **LENT**



# East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Fifth Sunday in**

**Lent (B)**

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**Antiphons,**

**Prayers and Readings**

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## **Entrance Antiphon**

*Judica me, Deus (cf Ps 43:1-2)*

Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

## **Collect**

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. 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 31:31-34 (RSV)*

'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'

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**Psalm 51:3-4, 12-15 R/ 12**

**R/ Create a pure heart for me, O God.**

Have mercy on me, O God, according to  
your merciful love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me completely from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.

Create a pure heart for me, O God;  
renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence;  
take not your holy spirit from me.

Restore in me the joy of your salvation;  
sustain in me a willing spirit.  
I will teach transgressors your ways,  
that sinners may return to you.

**Second Reading**

*Hebrews 5:7-9 (RSV)*

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; <sup>9</sup> and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

**Gospel**

*John 12:20-33 (RSV)*

At that time: Among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup> So these came to Philip, who was from Beth-sa'ida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' <sup>22</sup> Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. <sup>23</sup> And Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup> He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honour him.

<sup>27</sup> 'Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour"? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' <sup>29</sup> The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; <sup>32</sup> and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.' <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what death he was to die.

## **Apostles' Creed**

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Hear us, almighty God, and, having instilled in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this sacrifice. Through Christ our Lord.

### **Preface**

*(De virtute Crucis)*

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 through the saving Passion of your Son the whole world has received a heart to confess the infinite power of your majesty, since by the wondrous power of the Cross, your judgment on the world is now revealed and the authority of Christ crucified. And so, Lord, with all the Angels and Saints, we, too, give you thanks, as in exultation we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

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## **SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

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

*after St Alphonsus Liguori (18<sup>th</sup> cent.)*

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

+                                            +                                            +                                            +                                            +

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

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### **Communion Antiphon**

*Omnis qui vivit (cf Jn 11:26)*

Everyone who lives and believes in me will not die for ever, says the Lord.

### **Prayer after Communion**

We pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

## Scripture Reading (Lent Week 5)

<b>Monday</b>	Daniel 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62	John 8:12-20
<b>Tuesday</b>	Numbers 21:4-9	John 8:21-30
<b>Wednesday</b>	Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95	John 8:31-42
<b>ANNUNCIATION</b>	<b>Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10</b>	
	<b>Hebrews 10:4-10</b>	<b>Luke 1:26-38</b>
<b>Friday</b>	Jeremiah 20:10-13	John 10:31-42
<b>Saturday</b>	Ezekiel 37:21-28	John 11:45-56
<b>PALM SUNDAY (B)</b>		
<b>Commemoration of the Entry into Jerusalem:</b>		<b>Mark 11:1-10</b>
<b>Mass:</b>	<b>Isaiah 50:4-7</b>	
	<b>Philippians 2:6-11</b>	<b>Mark 14:1 - 15:47</b>

## *Ave Regina Cælórum*

*Ave Regína Cælórum  
Ave, Dómina angelórum,  
Salve, radix, salve, orta,  
Ex qua mundo lux est orta.*

*Gaude, Virgo gloriósa,  
Super omnes speciósa;  
Vale, o valde decóra,  
Et pro nobis Christum exóra.*

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

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

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# FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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## Monday in the Fifth Week of Lent

22<sup>nd</sup> March

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### Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. 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.

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## Monday in the Fifth Week of Lent

22<sup>nd</sup> March

### Reading

*John 8:1-11 (RSV)*

#### *The Woman Caught in Adultery*

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup> Early in the morning he came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst <sup>4</sup> they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?' <sup>6</sup> This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup> And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.' <sup>8</sup> And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>9</sup> But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup> Jesus looked up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' <sup>11</sup> She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.'



## Reflection

'**ONLY** two remain' at the end of this story, St Augustine remarked, 'the wretched woman and the incarnation of mercy'. It's a strange story not least because it almost certainly doesn't belong in St John's Gospel. It is missing from several manuscripts and is sometimes found in St Luke's Gospel, after Luke 21:38, just before the Passion Narrative. It certainly feels more like a St Luke story than a St John story and, putting it in St Luke would harmonise with St Luke's theme of Jesus withdrawing to pray on the Mount of Olives which is where this story begins. The importance of the passage floating between different sites – now Luke, now John – is that, though it is not a good fit into the overall pattern of events, it is clearly a very beautiful and valuable story. If we had lost it, we would have lost a great deal. For one thing, and typical of St Luke, is Jesus' immense empathy with women. He – the Judge of All – sits alongside this poor woman non-judgmentally. He merely doodles in the dust until the woman's accusers have all sidled off. Jesus doesn't condone the woman's sin - he tells her 'go and do not sin again' – but he is offering loving acceptance of her. If we are to understand the depths of the divine compassion, we need this story. And, of course, the woman caught *in flagrante* is a symbol of Israel – God's people were for ever going off with other gods – and, more recently, of the Church, where, all too often, sin cries out for punishment. But it is not only the woman who is the Church. So are her accusers.

## Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

**23<sup>rd</sup> March**

**Reading**

*Numbers 21:4-9 (RSV)*

*Whoever looks at the Bronze Serpent on the Pole will live.*

<sup>4</sup> From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup> And 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.' <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup> And 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. <sup>8</sup> And 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.' <sup>9</sup> 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

**AT FIRST** sight, today's reading from Numbers offends our religious sensibilities. For one thing, how does setting up a bronze serpent survive the prohibition of graven images? The golden calf at Horeb (Exodus 32 and Psalm 106:19) caused great offence and disaster, whereas the bronze serpent, a later episode in Israel's journey, was the way of averting disaster. And can we really go along with the idea of looking at something and being healed and restored? Well, Jesus does! In John 3:14 we hear that the bronze serpent is a type of the saving Cross. There are important differences between the golden calf and the bronze serpent: the calf was manufactured by a rebellious people, pooling their gold, and forsaking the God with whom their leader, Moses, was communing. It was an act of disobedience. The bronze serpent, possibly the standard or symbol of the tribe of Levi, to which Moses and Aaron belonged, was God's instrument, rescuing a wounded and frightened people. Just like the Cross! Both bronze serpent and Cross are symbols of obedience. In our own troubled times, into which the psalm, used in full, speaks so eloquently, we shall find peace only in the Cross. Colossians 1:20 tells us that Christ reconciles 'to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his Cross'.

# Wednesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

24<sup>th</sup> March

**Reading**

*Daniel 3 (RSV)*

*The Burning, Fiery Furnace*

Nebuchadnezzar said to them, 'Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? <sup>15</sup> Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?'

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.'

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. <sup>20</sup> And he ordered certain mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.....

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counselors, 'Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?' They answered the king, 'True, O king.' <sup>25</sup> He answered, 'But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.'...<sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set at naught the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.'

## Reflection

**TODAY'S** reading from the Book of Daniel is a tale of derring-do – that wonderful phrase from Chaucer. Our three heroes defy the King of Babylon, during the Exile in Babylon, and follow their leader, Daniel, in refusing to bow down to idols. They are cast into a 'burning, fiery furnace', heated to seven times its normal heat, and, unscathed, they are joined by a fourth in the flames – one 'like a son of the gods'. The Story of the Three Young Men is one of the Old Testament incidents which -, story-telling rather than historical record, show God's love and protection for his Holy Ones and thus prefigure Christ. We are reminded of that psalm verse (16:10) - 'thou didst not suffer thy holy one to see corruption' - which in Handel's Messiah speaks of God the Father's preservation of his Son.

There is particular relevance of the burning, fiery furnace to our present difficulties, as we have lived through what feels like a disaster movie. God cares for, and ultimately preserves, those who place their trust in him, but, in our present circumstances, many face illness and death. In other parts of the world, many also face grave deprivation, disease, and starvation. The New Testament scholar, Tom Wright, in *Time* magazine, reminded us that Christianity has nothing to say to help us understand plague and pestilence. All we can do, as God's people, as history teaches us, is join in lamentation. The Holy Father said something similar in *Urbi et Orbi* in St Peter's Square last year, when he stood alone, like Moses or Elijah, and argued with God.

## ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March**

### Collect

**O GOD**, who willed that your Word should take on the reality of human flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary: grant, we pray, that we, who confess our Redeemer to be God and Man, may merit to become partakers in his divine nature. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

## Reading

Luke 1:26-38 (RSV)

### *The Birth of Jesus Foretold*

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!' <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

<sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I have no husband?' <sup>35</sup> And the angel said to her,

'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

<sup>36</sup> And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing will be impossible.' <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her.

## Reflection

**THE ANNUNCIATION** of the Lord is the celebration of the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to Our Lady that she would conceive and become the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God. Gabriel told Mary to name her son Yehoshua ('Jesus') meaning 'YHWH is salvation'. This event, marking the beginning of the Incarnation, occurred in the sixth month of St Elizabeth's pregnancy with St John the Baptist (Luke 1:26). Since the second century,

the Annunciation has been observed on 25<sup>th</sup> March and gives us a date for Christmas, the birth of Christ, nine months after his conception.

St Irenæus of Lyon reckoned that this date, approximately the Vernal Equinox, co-incided with the date of the Passion of Christ. Others regarded it as the date not only of the Crucifixion but also of the Creation of the world. Thus Lady Day, as it was called in England, marked the New Year until the change to the Gregorian Calendar in 1752 (a change which necessitated a new date, 5<sup>th</sup> April, for the purposes of calculating the financial year).

St Ephraim, teaching that the Annunciation fell on 10 Nisan, in the Hebrew Calendar, noted that this was the day on which the Passover Lamb is selected (Exodus 12) and not infrequently 10 Nisan coincides with 25<sup>th</sup> March. In the West, when 25<sup>th</sup> March falls during Holy Week or the Easter Octave, the Annunciation is transferred to a later date. In the East, however, the co-incidence of the Annunciation with either Good Friday or Easter Sunday is regarded as a special blessing. On Good Friday the Divine Liturgy is not normally celebrated but it is when the Annunciation falls on that date. On Easter Sunday, the coincidence with the Annunciation is called ***Kyriopascha*** and the rubrics governing the celebration of Annunciation and Easter alongside each other are particularly complicated.

## **Friday in the Fifth Week of Lent**

### **26<sup>th</sup> March**

#### **Reading**

*Jeremiah 20:10-13 (RSV)*

*The Lord is at my side, a mighty hero*

For I hear many whispering.

Terror is on every side!

“Denounce him! Let us denounce him!”

say all my familiar friends,

watching for my fall.

“Perhaps he will be deceived,

then we can overcome him,

and take our revenge on him.”

<sup>11</sup>But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior;  
therefore my persecutors will stumble,  
they will not overcome me.  
They will be greatly shamed,  
for they will not succeed.  
Their eternal dishonour  
will never be forgotten.

<sup>12</sup>O LORD of hosts, who try the righteous,  
who see the heart and the mind,  
let me see your vengeance upon them,  
for to you have I committed my cause.

<sup>13</sup>Sing to the LORD;  
praise the LORD!  
For he has delivered the life of the needy  
from the hand of evildoers.

## Reflection

The prophecy of Jeremiah comes immediately before the downfall of Jerusalem in 597BC and his constant warnings about imminent destruction at the hands of the Babylonians fall on deaf ears. People want to hear a prophet but only one who reassures them that all will be well. In today's passage, Jeremiah is alone and at the end of his tether but nonetheless places his trust in God. We can imagine justifiably some such passage – perhaps one learnt by memory – being said by Jesus during his Passion. He would not have said 'let me see your vengeance upon them', but he would have said 'for to you have I committed my cause.' In this passage, as we read it, we are not only looking at the Way of the Cross, which we shall follow next week, but entrusting our lives to God.

[AB1]

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# THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MARK,

### *Chapter by Chapter*

#### **Mark 9** *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*

**9** <sup>1</sup> And Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.'

#### *The Transfiguration*

<sup>2</sup> And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup> and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared to them Eli'jah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus. <sup>5</sup> And Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah.' <sup>6</sup> For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid. <sup>7</sup> And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.' <sup>8</sup> And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only.

#### *The Coming of Elijah*

<sup>9</sup> And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant. <sup>11</sup> And they asked him, 'Why do the scribes say that first Eli'jah must come?' <sup>12</sup> And he said to them, 'Eli'jah does come first to restore all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup> But I tell you that Eli'jah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.'



### *The Healing of a Boy with a Spirit*

<sup>14</sup> And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd about them, and scribes arguing with them. <sup>15</sup> And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and ran up to him and greeted him. <sup>16</sup> And he asked them, 'What are you discussing with them?' <sup>17</sup> And one of the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; <sup>18</sup> and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.' <sup>19</sup> And he answered them, 'O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.' <sup>20</sup> And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup> And Jesus asked his father, 'How long has he had this?' And he said, 'From childhood. <sup>22</sup> And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.' <sup>23</sup> And Jesus said to him, 'If you can! All things are possible to him who believes.' <sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!' <sup>25</sup> And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again.' <sup>26</sup> And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, 'He is dead.' <sup>27</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. <sup>28</sup> And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' <sup>29</sup> And he said to them, 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.'

### *Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection*

<sup>30</sup> They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; <sup>31</sup> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, 'The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise.' <sup>32</sup> But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him.

### *Who is the Greatest?*

<sup>33</sup> And they came to Caper'na-um; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you discussing on the way?' <sup>34</sup> But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest. <sup>35</sup> And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, 'If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.' <sup>36</sup> And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.'

### *Another Exorcist*

<sup>38</sup> John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us.' <sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, 'Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. <sup>40</sup> For he that is not against us is for us. <sup>41</sup> For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward.'

### *Temptations to Sin*

<sup>42</sup> 'Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. <sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. <sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, <sup>48</sup> where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. <sup>49</sup> For every one will be salted with fire. <sup>50</sup> Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.'

**FINE**