

**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 ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

15th – 22nd August 2021



***Mary, exalted above the choirs of angels
into eternal triumph with Christ***

ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

and WEEK 20 YEAR 1

15th – 22nd August 2021

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.

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FEAST OF TITLE AND ANNIVERSARY OF CONSECRATION (1865)

15th August	<u>11am</u> 6pm	Solemn Mass Holy Mass	<i>Pro populo</i> <i>Private Intention</i>
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WEEK 20 (Year 1)

Monday 16th August	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
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Tuesday 17th August	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
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Wednesday 18th August	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
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Thursday 19th August	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
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Friday 20th August	St Bernard, Abbot, Doctor of the Church 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
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Saturday 21st August	St Pius X, Pope <i>No Mass</i>		<i>[White]</i>
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SUNDAY 21B			<i>[Green]</i>
22nd August	9.30am 6pm	Parish Mass Holy Mass	<i>Pro populo</i> <i>Private Intention</i>

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979

aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Reflection *The Holy Eucharist IV:*

'My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.'

John 6:51-58

Jesus said to the crowd:

⁵¹ 'I AM the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; ⁵⁴ he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.'

THIS is the Gospel passage set for Sunday 20B which, as usual, is displaced by the Solemnity of the Assumption. In this Year of the Eucharist we are following the Eucharistic teaching in John 6 particularly attentively and for completeness' sake we give it here. For Catholics the Church is a sacrament of the Incarnation – Christ continuing to live in our midst – and in the Eucharist we feed on him. It is partaking of this 'daily bread' which not only gives us a *præ gustatum* (a foretaste) of heaven but mysteriously means that 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' (*Gal 2:20*)

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

On **Sunday 15th August**, St Mary's Feast of Title and Anniversary of Consecration in 1865, morning Mass is sung at 11am instead of 9.30am.

We welcome and thank a group of singers who will adorn our worship to the greater glory of God. After Mass, weather permitting, there will be a celebratory glass in the churchyard. There will be a 6pm Mass as usual.

BOOKING FOR MASS

Please book for 9.30am Sunday Mass before 12 noon on Fridays hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk On Saturday contact Fr Andrew on aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

There is now no need to book for the 6pm Mass. Nonetheless we are required to carefully note who comes, in case of infection alerts, and so we ask you to sign in on Sunday night and sit as allocated by the steward.

CHURCH SERVICES LIVESTREAM

On Sunday 8th, there were 279 hits from 67 unique viewers, with 127 remaining on-line long enough to take part in Mass. 55 machines were in the UK, 12 in the rest of the world. (I assume 'unique viewers' are those whose who looked at us rather than surfing through different churches....)

GIVING PAGE

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.

CHARITY: WANTAGE

Jackymattam@btinternet.com helps with the poor locally. Contact her about what else she needs. Meanwhile, does anyone have the following;

- Clothes for girls, 7-8 years, 9-10 years, 4-5 years
- Clothes for boys, 8-9 years, 5-6 years
- Shoes for girls, adult size 2, child size 10, child size 12
- Shoes for boys, child size 12 and child size 13
- Double duvet covers, double sheets and pillow cases

All MUST be in clean and wearable condition.

AN UPDATE ON ST AMAND'S MARY'S MEALS PROJECT

With the generosity from St Mary's Parish, the family, and friends of St Amand's school, we raised more than enough money for the sponsorship of The Redeemed Elementary and High, Liberia, for one year.

With your help, we have provided every child, with a hot meal every day at their school; this is a great gift especially in such a challenging year.

We decided to forge ahead with sponsorship for a second year; we currently have raised £2,645.91 of £3,737. We are planning a second sponsored walk in September and hope to raise the remaining amount, therefore commencing the second year from September 2021. Should you feel you are able to help us reach our target by donating £15.90 to feed one child for a year, we would very much appreciate it. You can donate online: [Projects | Mary's Meals \(marysmeals.org\)](http://Projects | Mary's Meals (marysmeals.org))

With thanks

Helen Ellery

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

We have about 15 regular contributors a month for whom we are not able to claim Gift Aid, at least at present. 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

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

Are you in the habit of looking up and using our website? This Bulletin appears each week on the website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk
Some look at our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY DURING THE SUMMER

There are no special Children's Prayers at 9am at St Mary's on Sunday during the summer, but we offer access to a website of the SDC Children's Liturgy Resource. All you need to do is click on this link: <http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/>

Also we publish **at the very end** of this bulletin (pages 21-24) the full CAFOD programme for children for the summer.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S AUGUST PRAYER INTENTION

Let us pray for the Church, that She may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel.

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Joyce MacKenzie, 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, Andrew Gunn, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol, Christine Robinson, Rose

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 8th - 14th August: Francis Marshall, Charles Lafferty, Angela Stilwell, George Hunt, Elizabeth Boyle, Janet Russell, Harold Hackwood, Herbert Reeley

East Hendred Catholic Parish



**The Assumption of
the Blessed Virgin
Mary (ABC)
15th August
Antiphons,
Prayers and
Readings**

The Solemnity of the Assumption is not only the Principal Feast of our Lady but, in East Hendred Parish, our feast of title. It is also the anniversary of the consecration of the Church in 1865. Though it was defined only in 1950 that Mary had passed, body and soul, into the glory of heaven, this belief is ancient and was known in the early Christian centuries. It marks her out as the one who, pre-eminently, shared in the glory of her Son's Resurrection but it also is a sign to us that we too shall share in the glory of heaven. This is expressed succinctly in today's New Testament Reading: 'For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.' (1 Cor. 15)

Entrance Antiphon

Signum magnum

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

Cf Rev. 12:1

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, who assumed the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the Mother of your Son, body and soul into heavenly glory: grant, we pray, that, always attentive to the things that are above, we may merit to be sharers of her glory. 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

Revelation 11:19; 12:1-6, 10 (RSV)

A great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them

to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days..... And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

Psalm 45:10-12, 16 R/ (Grail) 10

R/ On your right stands the queen in garments of gold.

The daughters of kings are those whom you favour.

On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Listen, O daughter; pay heed and give ear:

forget your own people and your father's house. **R/**

So will the king desire your beauty.

He is your lord, pay homage to him.

The maiden companions are escorted amid gladness and joy;

they pass within the palace of the king. **R/**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:20-26 (RSV)

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, **alleluia.** Mary has been taken up into heav'n: all the choirs of angels are rejoicing. Alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 1:39-56(RSV)

Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechari'ah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.' And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm,
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,
he has put down the mighty from their thrones,
and exalted those of low degree;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham
and to his posterity for ever.'

And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

Prayer over the Offerings

May this oblation, our tribute of homage, rise up to you, O Lord, and, through the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, whom you assumed into heaven, may our hearts, aflame with the fire of love, constantly long for you. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

De gloria Mariæ Assumptæ

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 today the Virgin Mother of God was assumed into heaven, as the beginning and image of your Church's coming to perfection and a sign of sure hope and comfort to your pilgrim people; rightly you would not allow her to see the corruption of the tomb, since from her own body she marvellously brought forth your incarnate Son, the Author of all life. And so, in company with the choirs of Angels, we praise you, and with joy we proclaim:

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

All generations will call me blessed, for he who is mighty has done great things for me.

Beatam me dicent

Luke 1:48-49

Prayer after Communion

Having received the Sacrament of salvation, we ask you to grant, O Lord, that, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom you assumed into heaven, we may be brought to the glory of the resurrection. Through Christ our Lord.

Salve Regina

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Scripture Reading (Week 20[I])

Monday	Judges 2:11-19	Matthew 19:16-22
Tuesday	Judges 6:11-24	Matthew 19:23-30
Wednesday	Judges 9:6-15	Matthew 20:1-16
Thursday	Judges 11:29-39	Matthew 22:1-14
Friday	Ruth 1:1,3-6,14-16,22	Matthew 22:34-40
Saturday	Ruth 2:1-3,8-11;4:13-17	Matthew 23:1-12
Sunday 21B	Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18	
	Ephesians 5:21-32	John 6:56-69

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For the weekday readings and reflections, see also

www.hundredcatholicparish.org.uk

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

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

16th – 20th August 2021

Monday in Week 20 *Per Annum [Year 1]*

16th August

Reading

Judges 2:11-19 (RSV)

Israel's Unfaithfulness

¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Ba'als; ¹² and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were round about them, and bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They forsook the LORD, and served the Ba'als and the Ash'taroth. ¹⁴ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them; and he sold them into the power of their enemies round about, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. ¹⁵ Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them; and they were in sore straits.

¹⁶ Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the power of those who plundered them. ¹⁷ And yet they did not listen to their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed down to them; they soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so. ¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of

those who afflicted and oppressed them. ¹⁹ But whenever the judge died, they turned back and behaved worse than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them; they did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.

Reflection

THE FIRST reading at Mass for Monday to Thursday this week is from the Book of Judges. We have moved on from looking back to the time of Moses – who is seldom mentioned – and, after a turbulent history, we see emerging the prospect of the establishing of a king, which proves to be a mixed blessing, to say the least. The last verse in the Book of Judges (21:25) makes this pointed remark:

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

The Judges come before the Kings and they are strong figures who emerge to re-establish peace and thus give renewed stability to the Hebrew community. Contrary to the general pattern of male domination, Deborah emerges not only as one of the Judges but perhaps the strongest and most remarkable. We are still more than 1,000 years before the Birth of Christ and the events are a mixture of legend and oral history, probably written down in the sixth century BC during the Babylonian Exile by someone generally known as 'the Deuteronomistic historian'. This history comprises Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, the two books of Samuel, and the two books of Kings. The repeating cycle is: disobedience to the Lord, punishment, repentance, and restoration. The disobedience is almost always going after other gods and lapsing into immoral behaviour. The punishment is almost always military defeat and subjugation. The restoration then follows through the valour and wisdom of one of the Judges who is raised up to lead the people.

Tuesday in Week 20 [Year 1]

17th August

Reading

Judges 6:11-24 (RSV)

The Call of Gideon

¹¹ Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to Jo'ash the Abiez'rite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide it from the Mid'ianites. ¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, 'The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valour.' ¹³ And Gideon said to him, 'Pray, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this befallen us? And where are all his wonderful deeds which our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Mid'ian.' ¹⁴ And the LORD turned to him and said, 'Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Mid'ian; do not I send you?' ¹⁵ And he said to him, 'Pray, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manas'seh, and I am the least in my family.' ¹⁶ And the LORD said to him, 'But I will be with you, and you shall smite the Mid'ianites as one man.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'If now I have found favour with you, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. ¹⁸ Do not depart from here, I pray you, until I come to you, and bring out my present, and set it before you.' And he said, 'I will stay till you return.'

¹⁹ So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the oak and presented them. ²⁰ And the angel of God said to him, 'Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.' And he did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and there sprang up fire from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. ²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD; and Gideon said, 'Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.' ²³ But the LORD said to him, 'Peace be to you; do

not fear, you shall not die.’²⁴ Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it, The LORD is peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

Reflection

MANY people have heard of Gideon Bibles, as traditionally found in hotel rooms, without knowing the story of Gideon. Gideon is presented as a rather timid man, who shies away from the description of him as ‘a man of valour’ and who demands miraculous signs to prove that he is being called by the Lord. The signs include, notably, the laying of a fleece overnight twice: once for there to be no dew on the fleece when there is on the surrounding area and once for there to be dew on the fleece when there is no dew on the surrounding area. Gideon is raised up by God to defeat the Midianites but, lest they take pride in their own might, the band who are chosen to take on this military task are few in number, as chosen by God. First, the faint-hearted are sent home and, of the rest, there are three hundred men who are then selected on the basis of their rather uncouth drinking habits, lapping water with their tongues, as dogs do. This little band go on to launch a surprise dawn attack, an attack involving torches, trumpets, and shouting. They gain the victory and Gideon proves to be a good and righteous judge until, finally, he sets up a forbidden shrine in his home town of Ophrah.

Wednesday in Week 20 [Year 1]

18th August

Reading

Judges 9:6-15 (RSV)

The Parable of the Trees

⁶And all the citizens of Shechem came together, and all Beth-millo, and they went and made Abim’elech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.

⁷When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Geri’zim, and cried aloud and said to them, ‘Listen to me, you men of Shechem, that God may listen to you. ⁸The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over

us.’⁹ But the olive tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my fatness, by which gods and men are honored, and go to sway over the trees?’¹⁰ And the trees said to the fig tree, ‘Come you, and reign over us.’¹¹ But the fig tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to sway over the trees?’¹² And the trees said to the vine, ‘Come you, and reign over us.’¹³ But the vine said to them, ‘Shall I leave my wine which cheers gods and men, and go to sway over the trees?’¹⁴ Then all the trees said to the bramble, ‘Come you, and reign over us.’¹⁵ And the bramble said to the trees, ‘If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.’

Reflection

AFTER Gideon came Abimelech, who slaughtered his brothers except for one. Jotham, the surviving brother, had escaped and was used by the Lord to rebuke Abimelech and the Israelites by telling them a parable, probably the oldest one we have. In the tale, the olive tree is Gideon, the fig-tree Gideon’s legitimate son and heir, and the vine his grandson. The cedars of Lebanon were the men of Shechem and Abimelech the bramble, the symbol of ruin. The parable, as is the way with parables, has both an urgent and local message, specific to the time of its telling and a universal meaning. Just as the Israelites, by their idolatry, always brought upon themselves defeat and subjugation, so individuals, we learn, are authors of their own misfortune and bring about their own downfall.

Thursday in Week 20 [Year 1]

19th August

Reading

Judges 11:29-39 (RSV)

Jephthah’s Daughter

²⁹Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasse, and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. ³⁰And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, ‘If you wilt give the Ammonites into my hand, ³¹then whoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be

the LORD's, and I will offer him up for a burnt offering.' ³² So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them; and the LORD gave them into his hand. ³³ And he smote them from Aro'er to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim, with a very great slaughter. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel.

³⁴ Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah; and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵ And when he saw her, he rent his clothes, and said, 'Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me; for I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back my vow.' ³⁶ And she said to him, 'My father, if you have opened your mouth to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone forth from your mouth, now that the LORD has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites.' ³⁷ And she said to her father, 'Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my companions.' ³⁸ And he said, 'Go.' And he sent her away for two months; and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. ³⁹ And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had made. She had never known a man.

Reflection

THE STORY of Jephthah's daughter is surely the most difficult of all the stories. Unlike the story of Abraham and Isaac, where disaster is averted, here is a story of a man who does offer up his child as a human sacrifice. Jephthah defeats the Ammonites precisely because, in his view, he had vowed to offer in sacrifice whatever living thing met him when he returned from battle. It was a tragedy that the living thing was a young woman and that she was his only daughter. It is very much like a Greek tragedy and, not surprisingly, when the Church forbade going to the opera house during Lent, people flocked to performances of the oratorio Jephthah, set memorably by both Carissimi and Handel. Though we began by calling this 'the most difficult of all the stories', it really is so clearly wrong-headed in its portrayal of the will of God that it shows us that we really do have to be careful, particularly as we approach and handle these ancient stories. It is a rare survival of human sacrifice, pointing perhaps to the end of such sacrifices. Devotionally, Jephthah's daughter shows us the purity and submissive obedience which we

associate with the Blessed Virgin Mary, but, as St Augustine pointed out, these stories are descriptive rather than prescriptive. We conclude that we often learn from them more about human nature and religious development than about the holiness of God and what he seeks from us.

St Bernard, Abbot, Doctor of the Church

20th August

Friday in Week 20 [Year 1]

Reading

Ruth 1:1,3-6,14-16,22 (RSV)

Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem

1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. They went into the country of Moab and remained there..... **3** But Elim'elech, the husband of Na'omi, died, and she was left with her two sons. **4** These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years; **5** and both Mahlon and Chil'ion died, so that the woman was bereft of her two sons and her husband.

6 Then she started with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. **14** Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 And she said, 'See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.' **16** But Ruth said, 'Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; ... **22** So Na'omi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Reflection

THE BOOK of Ruth, in the Bible order followed by Christians, is placed between the Book of the Judges and the First Book of Samuel. It is set in the time of the Judges and, as an interlude, is certainly a welcome relief from the somewhat unrelenting cycle of obedience-disobedience-defeat-

repentance-restoration that we encounter throughout the historical books. Ruth is portrayed as a forebear of King David (Ruth 4:18-22; Mt 1:5) and in that sense we are moving towards the time of kings. References to David, it goes without saying, have particular resonance, in different ways, for both Jews and Christians. We notice, for example, that the story begins in Bethlehem. Ruth is by no means the first significant female figure in the Bible – we had Deborah in the Book of Judges, for example – but the book of Ruth is notable for being written from a feminine perspective: Ruth and Naomi, her mother-in-law, are the main characters. In a matrilineal religion – in Judaism, Jewishness is passed down through the mother – it is striking that one of its main female personalities, Ruth, is a Moabitess who adopts the religion of her mother-in-law. She becomes a Gentile matriarch as, famously, she says to Naomi (1:16)

Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

These two widows – each having lost an Israelite husband – are reliant on each other, emotionally and materially.

The Book of Ruth deserves more than an extract or two read at Mass. It repays reading straight through. In four brief chapters we have a love story, set out in an elegant chiasmic structure. Taking the shape A-B-C-D-C¹-B¹-A¹, the outside layers are (A) the line of Elimelech of Bethlehem (who has two sons who die) and (A¹) the line of Boaz with whom Ruth falls in love. This line of descent will lead to King David and thus to Christ, the Son of David. B is all about Naomi and her daughters-in-law at first lacking everything and then, towards the end of the book (B¹), lacking nothing. C is the courtship of Boaz and Ruth and subsequently (C¹) the marriage of Boaz and Ruth.





Children's Liturgy resources: Summer 2021

The summer holidays have arrived, and after a challenging few months, I hope you're all getting the opportunity to have a break and enjoy some long sunny days.

Perhaps you're looking for things to do with your family or church? If so, we are excited to be offering some brand-new [prayer activities](#) for families to explore over the summer break.

There are six different themes and we hope the ideas will help. These resources are taking the place of some of our regular children's liturgy illustrations during August, and we would love to get your feedback on how you find using them.

Included below are the children's liturgy resources you need to take you into September. Obviously, many groups will be gathering in different ways over the summer so please do use them in the way that best suits your circumstances.

We'll also be continuing to stream our [virtual children's liturgy](#) live every Sunday morning over the holiday period.

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August)

We celebrate how Mary was taken to heaven at the end of her life and reflect on the special song of praise that she sang to God.

[Download the accompanying activity sheet.](#)

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (22 August)

Lots of people found it too hard to believe that Jesus was really the Son of God, and so they gave up, went away and didn't listen to him anymore. What do we do when things are difficult?

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (29 August)

Jesus tells us that it is not enough to say that we believe in God. We must show that we love God through our actions and by being the best people that we can be.

[Download accompanying illustration](#)

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (5 September)

Jesus helps a man who is deaf to hear and to speak more clearly. We think about how we can listen and speak out.

[Download accompanying illustration](#)

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (12 September)

We hear that it is not always easy to follow Jesus. Sometimes it requires courage.

[Download accompanying illustration](#)

Wishing you all a fun and faith-filled Summer,



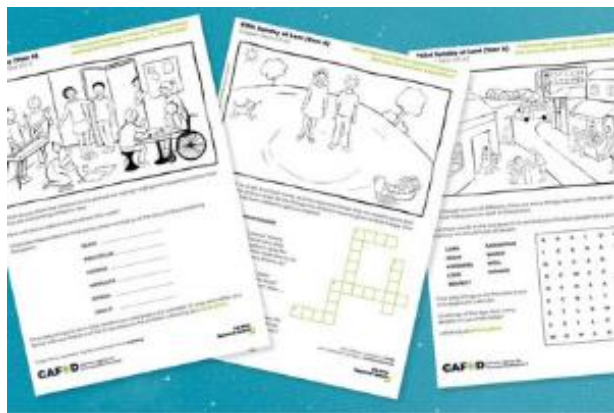
God of love,
open our ears to hear your word
and open our hearts that we may always speak up for what is right.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Family prayer resources

Share these creative prayer ideas and fun activities with your children throughout the school holidays.

[Find out more](#)



Children's liturgy group

Join our Facebook group to keep in touch and share family-friendly ideas and activities with our community.

[Join us](#)



Family activities

Explore our families page for more activities and prayer

s.

[Explore](#)



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