

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

Second Week of Easter

11th-18th April 2021



The Upper Room

East Hendred Catholic Parish

Easter Pastoral Letter 2021

Dear Friends

Easter in East Hendred was very encouraging. Nearly 120 individuals attended the services during the Triduum. The different services - Maundy Thursday, the two Good Friday liturgies, the Easter Vigil, and the two masses on Easter Day – were all full, but nearly everyone managed to attend their preferred choices, some coming three or even four times.

At the same time, we were very conscious of those unable to be there in person: the sick and housebound, and those who, because of a sense of their own, or other people's, vulnerability still prefer not to attend. Many were able to take part on www.churchservices.tv/easthendred which can also be reached via hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. The smaller seating capacity at Mass is considerably off-set by the opportunity to watch Mass on livestream. We are very aware that not many of our children are able to come at present and we hope that the school masses on Thursday in term-time, watched on livestream, and the brief Children's Morning Prayers livestreamed on Sundays at 9am are beginning to meet that need. St Patrick's remains closed for the time being. I calculate that 18 of our Easter 120 were St Patrick's folk and that proportion seems about right.

I am immensely proud of the East Hendred Catholic Family. We have distant relatives, who remain hard to contact, and some whose membership lies dormant. We are working hard to ensure that everyone who should be is on our database, and in reach electronically. Help us by filling in the database form! The last twelve months have taught us that we belong together even when we do not have chance to meet. We have learnt a great deal about what it means to belong to the Body of Christ, the Church, and we shall not unlearn the new things we have learned.

May the light of Christ rising in glory
dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

Fr Andrew

CONTACT DETAILS

Fr Andrew: 01235 835038 or 07976 437979
aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Reflection – *Easter Evening in the Upper Room*

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

THE FINAL verse of this Sunday's Gospel – 'Now Jesus did many other signs...which are not written in this book' – rather suggests that Chapter 20 is the original ending of John's Gospel. In fact, as we saw on Friday, and shall see again, there is a Chapter 21, with two further incidents. One is the Risen Lord, breakfasting with his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, after a gigantic catch of fish. The other is the incident when, three times, the Risen Lord invites Peter to express his love for him, a three-fold affirmation which puts right the three-fold denial when Jesus was on trial.

In Sunday's Gospel, Chapter 20, we see the disciples in the Upper Room, behind locked doors. It is the evening of Easter Day and the Risen Christ comes into their midst and greets them with the Sign of Peace. He shows them his hands and his feet so that they can see from the marks of the nails that it really is he. He breathes on them and, with the gift of the Holy Spirit, ordains them to carry out his apostolic work. They are not quite all there. Obviously they are one down, with the traitor Iscariot no longer in their midst, but they are missing a second one of the Twelve, Thomas, called the Twin. He is clearly of the introvert disposition, finding it easier to do his mourning in isolation. When he hears that the others have had an encounter with the Risen Christ he is incredulous and demands proof. He needs himself to touch the hands and the feet of the man who was crucified and who had died.

Eight days later – the following Sunday (so this evening, in a manner of speaking), they are again in the Upper Room and this time Thomas is with them. He receives the assurances he needs and the Lord is able to say to the apostles – and indeed, through the Gospel, to us: 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.' Obviously, later disciples who are not witnesses to the physical Resurrection of Christ need to be encouraged to believe without seeing. Pope St Leo the Great, the fifth century Pope, helps us understand. He writes:

In a mysterious way [Christ] began to be more present to them in his godhead once he had become more distant in his humanity....The faith of the believers was being drawn to touch, not with the hand of the flesh but with the understanding of the Spirit, the only-begotten Son, the equal of his Father. *(Sermo LXXIV De Ascensione Domini II:4)*

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

SECOND WEEK OF EASTER

11th -18th April 2021

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

please book for Sunday masses: hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Church open from 9am each day

SECOND SUNDAY IN EASTERTIDE			<i>[White]</i>
11th April	9.30am 6pm	Parish Mass Holy Mass	<i>Pro populo</i>
Monday 12th April	<i>Monday in the Second Week of Easter</i> 9.15am	Easter Mass	<i>[White]</i>
Tuesday 13th April	<i>Tuesday in the Second Week of Easter</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
Wednesday 14th April	<i>Wednesday in the Second Week of Easter</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
Thursday 15th April	<i>Thursday in the Second Week of Easter</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i>
Friday 16th April	<i>Friday in the Second Week of Easter</i> 9.15am	Holy Mass	<i>[White]</i> <i>Ints. of Eleanor Moodey</i>
Saturday 17th April	<i>Saturday in the Second Week of Easter</i> No Mass		<i>[White]</i>
THIRD SUNDAY IN EASTERTIDE			<i>[White]</i>
18th April	9.30am 6pm	Parish Mass Holy Mass	<i>Pro populo</i> <i>RIP Charlie Wilkes</i>

NOTE

Monday 19th – Friday 23rd April: *No Mass* at St Mary's

Tuesday 20th April: 10am Mass (St John Vianney, Wantage)
no booking required

Wednesday 21st April: 6pm Mass (English Martyrs, Didcot)
book through parish web-site

Friday 23rd April: 10am Mass (St John Vianney, Wantage)
no booking required

East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

EASTER HOLIDAY

Advance notice that there will be no Masses at St Mary's from Monday 19th April to Friday 23rd April inclusive. There are opportunities elsewhere (see above).

ST MARY'S OPENING

9am most days until about 5pm. Come along to Mass on weekdays. Masks and social distancing required. Book for Sunday Mass before 12 noon on Fridays hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk After that, contact Fr Andrew on 01235 835038 or aburnham@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk Space limited. Book early.

ST MARY'S ON LIVE-STREAM

On **Maundy Thursday** (1st April) there were 314 check-ins from 118 addresses, with 112 staying long enough to take part in the Mass. 78 UK, 23 Ireland, 17 elsewhere. On **Good Friday** (2nd April) there were 381 check-ins from 208 addresses, with 123 settling to watch. 141 UK, 53 Ireland, 14 elsewhere. On **Easter Eve** (3rd April) , there were 318 check-ins from 171 addresses, with 109 settling to watch. 113 UK, 44 Ireland, 12 elsewhere. On **Easter Day** (4th April) there were 289 check-ins from 126 addresses, with 123 settling to watch. 84 UK, 22 Ireland, 20 elsewhere.

CHARITY

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

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 Rice Krispies or wearing your jim-jams. The theme of today's Gospel at Mass is the Resurrection of Christ.
- (2) **Special stuff for Sunday** 11th April, Second Sunday of Easter, follows on the next couple of pages.



Speak, Lord



Acts 4:33-35
Psalm 117
1 John 5:1-6
John 20:19-31

SUNDAY LITURGY FOR CHILDREN

Year B — 2nd Sunday of Easter



THE APOSTLES SEE JESUS AGAIN ... ALIVE

1 The first time THOMAS was not there ...



It can't be true.
I refuse to believe.

2 The second time THOMAS was there.

MY LORD
AND MY
GOD,
I believe.



↑ Draw a picture of Jesus facing Thomas.

Jesus said to them:

"P _ A _ E B _ W _ T _ Y _ U."

YEAR B
Second Sunday of Easter
Sunday 11th April 2021

John 20:19-29

On the Sunday after Jesus had died his disciples sat huddled together in a locked room, hidden away for fear of being arrested. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the room with them. "Peace be with you," he said, and showed them the wounds in his hands and feet.

His disciples were overjoyed to see their master again.

"As my father sent me, I am sending you," said Jesus.

Then, breathing on them, he said,

"Receive the Holy Spirit, and know that whoever you forgive, I will forgive also." The disciples called Thomas, who was not with the others when Jesus had appeared, and because he had not seen him with his own eyes, he did not believe Jesus was alive.

A week later Jesus appeared to them again and greeted them with the words, "Peace be with you." He showed his wounds to Thomas and said, "Doubt no longer, Thomas." At once, Thomas fell to his knees and cried, "My Lord and my God."

Jesus said to him, "You believed because you have seen me with your own eyes. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Reflection

Can we see the risen Jesus today? Jesus lives among us, and we can recognise his presence in the people around us. A kind action or a loving remark are signs of Christ's power working through other people.

When Thomas recognised Jesus as the risen Lord, he said, "My Lord and my God." We use these words quietly at the consecration of the bread and wine, when we believe that they become Christ's body and blood. We cannot see Jesus, but we believe that he is really there.

Closing Prayer

Today we pray for those like Thomas, who cannot believe without seeing.

Increase their faith, Lord, and help them recognise you in the people they meet everyday. Amen

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

HOLY FATHER'S APRIL PRAYER INTENTION

We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.

FIRST COMMUNION GROUP

Pray for children who have just begun 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

Week 11th - 17th April: Frances Castle, Michael Watts, John Stibbs, Frank Morgan, James Dunn, Marcella Raab, Winifred Norris, Patricia Whiting.

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

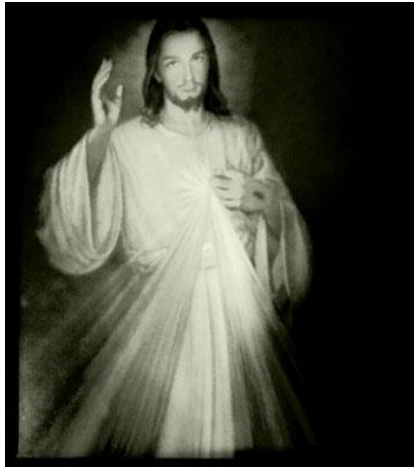
A donation to the parish may be made on
www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

Parish Administrators

hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk is monitored by the Parish Administrator and her Assistant.

Easter Collections were for the Parish Priest, a significant part of his stipend. Thank you very much indeed for your generosity.

East Hendred Catholic Parish



Divine Mercy Sunday
Second of Easter (B)
11th April 2021
Antiphons,
Prayers and Readings

Entrance Antiphon

Like new-born infants, you must long for the pure spiritual milk, that in him you may grow to salvation, alleluia. *Ps* Sing joyfully to God our strength: shout in triumph to the God of Jacob.

Quasimodo geniti infants

1 Pet 2:2; Ps 81:2

Collect

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, and by whose Blood they have been redeemed. 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

³² Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³ And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need.

Acts 4:32-35 (RSV)

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Alleluiatic Psalm*Ps 118:1, 2-4, 13-15, 22-24*

Give praise to the Lord for he is good,
his mercy endures for ever.

Alleluia.

Let the house of Israel say,
'His mercy endures for ever'.
Let the house of Aaron say,
'His mercy endures for ever.'

Alleluia.

Let those who fear the Lord say,
'His mercy endures for ever'.
I was thrust down, thrust down and falling,
but the Lord was my helper.

Alleluia.

The Lord is my strength and my song;
he was my saviour.
There are shouts of joy and salvation,
in the tents of the just.

Alleluia.

The stone that the builders rejected,
has become the corner stone.
By the Lord has this been done,
a marvel in our eyes.
This is the day the Lord has made;
let us rejoice in it and be glad.

Alleluia.**Second Reading***1 John 5:1-7 (RSV)*

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and every one who loves the parent loves the child. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶ This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. ⁷ And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

Sequence *Victimae Paschali Laudes*

Christians, to the Paschal Victim
offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
and Christ, the undefiled,
hath sinners to his Father reconciled.

Death with life contended: combat strangely ended!
Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.

Tell us, Mary: say
what thou didst see upon the way.
The tomb the Living did enclose;
I saw Christ's glory as He rose!

The angels there attesting;
shroud with grave-clothes resting.
Christ, my hope, has risen:
He goes before you into Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen
from the dead we know.
Victorious King, Thy mercy show! Amen. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, **R/ alleluia.**

Jesus said: You believe because you can see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.

R/ Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:19-31 (RSV)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.' Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.' Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the oblations of your people that, renewed by confession of your name and by Baptism, they may attain unending happiness. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface

(De mysterio paschali)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but on this day above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world; by dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising, restored our life. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim: Holy, holy, holy, &c.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

after St Alphonsus Liguori (18th cent.)

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

+ + + + +

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

Communion Antiphon

Mitte manum tuam

Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails, and do not be unbelieving but believing, alleluia. *cf Jn 20:27*

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that our reception of this paschal Sacrament may have a continuing effect in our minds and hearts. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading (Easter Week 2)

Monday	Acts 4:23-31	John 3:1-8
Tuesday	Acts 4:32-37	John 3:7-15
Wednesday	Acts 5:17-26	John 3:16-21
Thursday	Acts 5:27-33	John 3:31-36
Friday	Acts 5:34-42	John 6:1-15
Saturday	Acts 6:1-7	John 6:16-21

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (B)

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

1 John 2:1-5

Luke 24:35-48

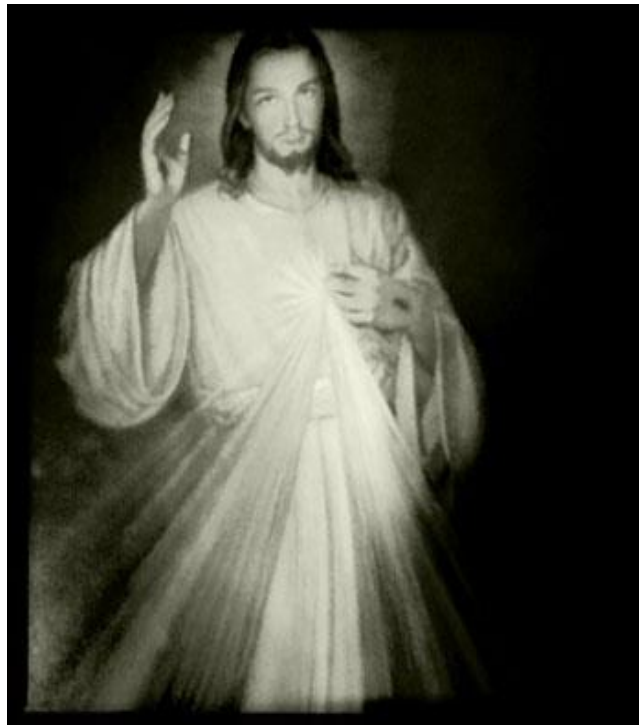
Ant.
6.
R

E-gí-na cáeli * læ-tá-re, alle-lú-ia: Qui- a
 quem me-ru- ísti portá-re, alle-lú-ia: Re-surréx-it,
 si-cut dix-it, alle- lú-ia: Ora pro no-bis De-um,
 alle-lú- ia.

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluia.
 he whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia.
 as he promised hath arisen, alleluia.
 pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluia.

V/ Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia:
R/ for the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY



11th – 17th April 2021

Divine Mercy Sunday (also known as the **Feast of the Divine Mercy**) is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter, the final day of the Easter Octave. It sprang from a vision of St Faustina Kowalska, on 23rd March 1937, in which Jesus promised a plenary indulgence to those who, under the usual rules, go to Confession and then receive Holy Communion. The image, as seen by St Faustina, is displayed on Divine Mercy Sunday. The devotion was commended by St John Paul II in June 2002 and his death and subsequent canonisation took place round Divine Mercy Sunday.

Monday in the Second Week of Easter

5th April 2021

Reading

Acts 4:23-31 (RSV)

The Believers Pray for Boldness

²³ When Peter and John were released they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, 'Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who by the mouth of our father David, your servant did say by the Holy Spirit,

**'Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples imagine vain things?
²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed' —**

²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.' ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

Reflection

AT THE beginning of Acts 4, we find the apostles effectively preaching the Gospel and apparently making about five thousand converts – a large number which contrasts with the small number of those in authority who aim to stop them. Peter and John are taken into custody but, once released, they find their feet, discovering that it is now they who are the leaders of the people. They re-join the apostolic circle and, having been repulsed once, resolve to seek empowerment from the Lord. Just as Moses was rejected by the people and had to renew his efforts (7:37-38) and as Jesus himself was rejected but was finally raised to the right hand of the

Father, so the apostles are strengthened by the experience of rejection and refreshed once more to speak the word of God with boldness.

Tuesday in the Second Week of Easter

13th April

Reading

Acts 4:32-37 (RSV)

The Believers share their Possessions

³² Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³ And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need. ³⁶ Thus Joseph who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Reflection

THIS passage is sometimes interpreted as showing that the Early Church was governed by socialist principles. Certainly, if that was the case, these principles – and the holding of everything in common – were not in force in the medium to long term. We glimpse the Church at the point at which it is compact and radical enough to act in interdependent ways which nowadays we should associate with a religious community. What St Luke is describing is a distinctly Greek understanding of friendship – something very different from the Hebrew tradition – where being 'of one heart and soul' is the essence of true friendship. The pooling of possessions arose from this friendship and is what one would expect to find in a radical community. The early Church was indeed a radical community. The phrase 'laid it at the apostles' feet', used more than once, is about obedient submission and Barnabas' gift of the proceeds from selling a field show the depth of commitment. St Luke may be drawing on Greek ideas of friendship but the emphasis on helping the needy is undeniably Hebrew. As it says in Deut 15:4 'But there will be no poor among you (for the LORD will bless you

in the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance to possess)'.
'

Wednesday in the Second Week of Easter

14th April

Reading

Acts 5:17-26 (RSV)

The Apostles Are Persecuted

¹⁷ The high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sad'ducees, and filled with jealousy ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹ But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, ²⁰ 'Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.' ²¹ And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and taught.

Now the high priest came and those who were with him and called together the council and all the senate of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²² But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, and they returned and reported, ²³ 'We found the prison securely locked and the sentries standing at the doors, but when we opened it we found no one inside.' ²⁴ Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. ²⁵ And some one came and told them, 'The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.' ²⁶ Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

Reflection

JUST before this passage, St Luke has placed the apostles in a position of authority – new leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel – in Solomon's Portico in the temple. They are figures of awe – people are afraid to approach them and are content to stand in Peter's shadow. The apostles themselves draw more and more converts to them, and people bring along their sick to be healed. These are the days of 'signs and wonders' and the leaders of the religious Establishment seek urgently to deal with the challenge. The apostles are arrested but, such is their power, the prison cannot hold them. They are quietly arrested again – quietly because there is a real danger that the public would treat the officers as blasphemers and stone them.

Thursday in the Second Week of Easter

15th April

Reading

Acts 5:27-33 (RSV)

²⁷ And when the officials had brought the apostles, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, 'We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.' ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.'

³³ When they heard this they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

Reflection

THIS is the second trial of the apostles before the 'Great Sanhedrin' which met in the Temple, in a building called the Hall of Hewn Stones. This religious court convened every day except on the sabbath and at festivals. There is an unmistakable confrontation here: the Sanhedrin accuse the apostles of bringing 'this man's blood upon us' – in effect blaming the Jewish religious leaders for the death of Jesus, rather than the Romans, the occupying power, who carried out the execution. In response, Peter and the apostles attribute guilt to the religious leaders for the death of Jesus 'whom you killed by hanging him on a tree'. As elsewhere in the New Testament, the policy is clearly not to over-emphasise the role of the Roman authorities. Also striking in today's readings is the way Peter and the apostles are not cowed by the authorities. In contrast with Jesus, who said very little in his trial, the apostles speak out. These are no longer the frightened men, dismayed by the death of their leader. From St Luke's perspective, they are the leaders of the New Israel, standing up to the leaders of the Old Israel.

Friday in the Second Week of Easter

16th April

Reading

Acts 5:34-42 (RSV)

A Pharisee in the council named Gama'li-el, a teacher of the law, held in honour by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a while. ³⁵ And he said to them, 'Men of Israel, take care what you do with these men. ³⁶ For before these days Theu'das arose, giving himself out to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was slain and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷ After him Judas the Galilean arose in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸ So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!'

⁴⁰ So they took his advice, and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name. ⁴² And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Reflection

THERE were 71 members of the Great Sanhedrin. Included were priests and levites and ordinary Jews whose blood line was such that their daughters would be deemed acceptable to marry priests. These then were the cream of Jewish society and it is in such company that the pharisee, Gamaliel, held an honourable place. He was not only a teacher of the law but clearly a profoundly spiritual man. He realised that, in all likelihood, this new religious movement would not last long and also that, if it did prove to be lasting, any opposition would be opposition to the divine will. From this incident we have the 'Gamaliel principle'. It suited St Luke to allow us to infer, from the 'Gamaliel principle', that the growth of the Christian Church was in accordance with the divine will. We notice too that the apostles took pride in being persecuted for the name of Jesus and that they were encouraged to teach and preach with increased fervour.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS-

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MARK,

Chapter by Chapter

We had reached Chapter 9 and we marked Holy Week by reading Chapters 14 and 15 and Easter Week by reading Chapter 16. We resume the sequence this week by reading Chapter 10.

Mark 10 *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*

Teaching about Divorce

10 And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again; and again, as his custom was, he taught them.

² And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' ³ He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' ⁴ They said, 'Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to put her away.' ⁵ But Jesus said to them, 'For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷ 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one.' So they are no longer two but one. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.'

¹⁰ And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹ And he said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'

Jesus Blesses Little Children

¹³ And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.' ¹⁶ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

The Rich Man

¹⁷ And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' ¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and mother.'" ²⁰ And he said to him, 'Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth.' ²¹ And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' ²² At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

²³ And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' ²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' ²⁶ And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, 'Then who can be saved?' ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.' ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, 'Behold, we have left everything and followed you.' ²⁹ Jesus said, 'Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many that are first will be last, and the last first.'

A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³² And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.

And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; ³⁴ and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise.'

The Request of James and John

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zeb'edee, came forward to him, and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' ³⁶ And he said to them, 'What do you want me to do for you?' ³⁷ And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?' ³⁹ And they said to him, 'We are able.' And Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.' ⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. ⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimae'us, a blind beggar, the son of Timae'us, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁸ And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁹ And Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; rise, he is calling you.' ⁵⁰ And throwing off his mantle he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ And Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' And the blind man said to him, 'Master, let me receive my sight.' ⁵² And Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.