

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

Third Week of Lent

20th – 27th March 2022



The Burning Bush

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20th – 27th March 2022

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

All masses at St Mary's live-streamed www.churchservices.tv/easthendred

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

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| Sunday 20th March | THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT 9.30am Parish Mass (<i>Fr Martin Flatman</i>) 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's (<i>Canon Peter Turbitt</i>) 5.30pm Adoration 6pm Holy Mass (<i>Fr David O'Sullivan</i>) | [PURPLE] |
| <i>(Readings: Lent Week 3)</i> | | |
| Monday 21st March | <i>of Third Week of Lent</i> No Mass | <i>[Purple]</i> <i>I The Agony in the Garden</i> |
| Tuesday 22nd March | <i>of Third Week of Lent</i> No Mass | <i>[Purple]</i> <i>II The Scourging at the Pillar</i> |
| Wednesday 23rd March | <i>of Third Week of Lent</i> 9am Morning Prayer No Mass | <i>[Purple]</i> <i>III The Crowning with Thorns</i> |
| Thursday 24^h March | <i>of Third Week of Lent</i> 9.15am Holy Mass <i>Intentions of David and Julie Lazarus (Annie Furlong)</i> | <i>[Purple]</i> <i>IV The Carrying of the Cross</i> |
| ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD (LADY DAY) | | |
| | 5.30pm Adoration 6pm Holy Mass | <i>Peace in Europe</i> |
| Friday 25th March | 8.30am Holy Mass at Hendred House 1.30pm School Mass at St Amand's 3pm Adoration at Hendred House 5pm Evensong at St Augustine's Church | <i>V The Crucifixion</i> |
| Saturday 26th March | <i>of Third Week of Lent</i> No Mass | <i>[Purple]</i> |
| Sunday 27th March | FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT 9.30am Parish Mass 11.15am Mass at St Patrick's 5.30pm Adoration 6pm Holy Mass | [ROSE] |

Confessions during Lent:
8.45am Sundays; after Mass, Monday to Friday;
or by arrangement

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



HOLY FATHER'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION

For a Christian response to bioethical challenges: We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTION

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Monday 21 st | Benedictines in the Diocese (EBC, Solesmes, Subiaco) |
| Tuesday 22 nd | Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption Hedge End |
| Wednesday 23 rd | The Work of the John Henry King Fund |
| Thursday 24 th | Parish of the Annunciation, Netley Abbey |
| Friday 25 th | Community of the Annunciation, Charminster, and Community of St Mary, Aldershot |
| Saturday 26 th | Community of Our Lady of the Annunciation & the Martyrs of Japan, Saint-Martin, Jersey |

THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

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

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Recently departed: Deidre Griffiths

Week 20th - 26th March: Albert Midwinter, Ernest Couling, William Carter, Winifred May Goodman, Claire Vaughan, Kathleen Ballard.

Reflection – *Spiritual Warfare*



St Sophia's Cathedral. Kyiv

THE BISHOP'S Pastoral Letter this Lent has asked us to take part in spiritual warfare, combatting the evil that is besetting Europe:

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. *Ephesians 6:12*

The weapons in our armoury are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and here are some ways in which we can do these things.

I Prayer

Adoration and Mass

We have introduced periods of Adoration before Sunday evening Mass and certain midweek Mass.

Confession

Lent is the time to prepare for Easter. Confessions take place at 8.45am on Sundays and after Mass any weekday or on demand.

Rosary

We are encouraged to make good use of the Rosary, especially during Lent the Sorrowful Mysteries. There will usually be a public decade on each of the Sorrowful Mysteries after Mass on Mondays to Fridays but the Rosary is mainly a private devotion.

The Prayer to St Michael the Archangel

Though its public use was discontinued after Vatican II, Pope St John Paul II, in his battle against communism, recommended its use and Bishop Philip is now making a similar recommendation.

The prayer draws heavily on imagery from the Apocalypse which some find particularly helpful in a time of war.

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

Psalm 31

Rabbi Yaakov Bleich, the Chief Rabbi for Ukraine, has asked Jews and Christians around the world to pray Psalm 31 in solidarity with those in Ukraine who are under attack. Apparently millions of people are saying this psalm daily. Verses 2-6 are a convenient abbreviation, printed here. The full psalm is given at the end of the Bulletin (see page 24 below).

1 A Psalm of David

- 2 In you, LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness deliver me;
- 3 incline your ear to me;
make haste to rescue me!
Be my rock of refuge,
a stronghold to save me.
- 4 For you are my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me.
- 5 Free me from the net they have set for me,
for you are my refuge.
- 6 Into your hands I commend my spirit;
you will redeem me, LORD, God of truth.

II Fasting and Abstinence

The formal fasts are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, when healthy adults under 60 years old are asked to make do with one main meal and a couple of snacks. The elderly and those with certain medical conditions are under no such obligation but all of us are asked to take whatever part we can in the spirit of fasting.

On Fridays throughout the year, except solemnities, and whatever our age, we are asked to do without meat, a small contribution to the care of the planet. Fasting and abstinence, like physical exercise, are ways of training the body but, as with any discipline, also impact on our spiritual life and can be 'offered up'.

III Almsgiving

Caritas-Spes had been working in Eastern Ukraine with the displaced families from the ongoing conflict in the disputed territories.

If you would like to support Caritas work in the emergency in Ukraine, please donate by visiting their website <https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/europe/ukraine-spes/>

Second Collection Those in our parishes who would like to contribute can use the CAFOD Lent Appeal envelopes: if you intend your donations specifically to benefit those in need in Ukraine, **please use envelopes marked 'Ukraine'**. Envelopes not so marked contain donations for the CAFOD's African cause.



East Hendred Catholic Parish

NOTICEBOARD

DIFFERENT MASS TIMES THIS WEEK

No Mass Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (21st-23rd March). Morning Prayer will happen on Wednesday at 9am and, in addition to the 9.15am School Mass on Thursday 24th there is Mass at 6pm, anticipating the Annunciation (Lady Day) with the intention for Peace in Europe. Adoration at 5.30pm before 6pm Mass.

LENT

During Lent, there is Morning Prayer at 9am on Wednesdays, before Mass, to which members of St Augustine's congregation are invited. On Fridays we are invited to St Augustine's at 5pm for Evensong. Please try to support these extra activities.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday 13th March 2022, 682(!) people viewed, 79 machines looking only at St Mary's. 47 of these were in the UK and 31 from eight other countries, including two looking in from Russia. 123 probably stayed on-line long enough to take part in Mass.

SYCAMORE

The **SYCAMORE** course for adults interested in finding out more about the Faith or preparing for baptism and/or confirmation is now well underway and next meets on Zoom at 8pm on Wednesday, 23th March.

PARISH SECRETARY

Contact Ma Lluïsa Jarne on office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk If you need to speak to her in person, she is available at one of the St Mary's Sunday masses and also on Mondays, 6pm-8pm, on 07983045824.

See also our website www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

See also our East Hendred Catholic Parish page on Facebook.

MISSIO BOXES

Margaret Maytham is asking those with red *Missio* boxes to hand them in for counting and re-supplying. Details at the back of the churches.

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2022

18th – 22nd July, flying from Bournemouth Airport. The cost is £675.00 per person sharing. Single rooms available at a supplement. Full board at La Solitude (with indoor swimming pool). Special rates for those between 15-35 volunteering to help with the liturgy, looking after pilgrims, pushing wheelchairs &c. lourdes@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

MUSIC FOR PASSIONTIDE

Sunday 3rd April is the beginning of what was traditionally called Passiontide, the two weeks leading up to Easter. To mark this, we are making special arrangements for that evening.

Resp. **P** Opus le me- um, quid se- ci, aut quid me-
litas fa- ci- ti- bi? Re- spon- de mi-
hi. Quere- am ego a- d- xi- vos de ter- ra JE-
gyp- ti et de do- mo ser- vi- tu- tis; quadra- gin-
ta annos in e- re- mo * Maria plu- i vo-
bis, et ob- li- ti es- tis me, di- cit Do- mi- nus.
V. Adde- xi vos per de- sertum quadra- ginta annos in e-
re- mo, et go Do- mi- nus. * Maria plu- i
vo- bis, et ob- li- ti es- tis me, di- cit Do-
mi- nus. V. Glo- ri- a Pa- tris, et Fi- li- i, et Spi-
ri- tu- i Sanc- to. * Maria plu- i vo-
bis, et ob- li- ti es- tis me, di- cit Do- mi- nus.

At 5pm there will be 'Music for Passiontide', sung beautifully by the *St Mary's Schola*, and including not only anthems and motets but hymns for congregational participation.

After a short break, the 6pm Mass will follow, with simple music sung by the *Schola*.

'What', you may ask, 'is a *Schola*?' In cathedrals and monasteries, more elaborate music, requiring musical skill, is sung by a '*Schola Cantorum*', literally a 'school of singers'. The last outing of the Schola was for the 9.30am Mass on the occasion of the Bishop's Visiting.

Admission to both the 5pm concert and the 6pm mass will be free and people may choose to attend either or both. There will be long enough between the two to leave or arrive.

ST AMAND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk

WE HAVE the immense privilege of hosting in our parish a Catholic Primary School serving the local area.

Ann-Marie Kershaw, a Foundation Governor, writes:

We are very keen to attract more Catholic families to our school. Please do encourage parents to make contact and visit the school to see what a Catholic school education looks like. We are able to take children into all Year groups and still have places for our Reception intake in September '22.

And she adds the following up-to-date news about the school.

St Amand's RC Primary School in East Hendred started Lent with a whole school Mass on Ash Wednesday in St Mary's Church, East Hendred with our chaplain Mgr Andrew Burnham. The children have chosen two Lenten projects. KS1 are raising £800 to send a child on the HCPT (Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust) trip to Lourdes and KS2 are fundraising for the Cardinal Hume Centre for young homeless people in London. We are also praying for children in Ukraine and helping with a local village collection for refugees coming out of the Ukraine. Meanwhile our beautiful grounds are showing the first signs of spring with bright yellow daffodils everywhere and the Eco-Committee working hard to plant seeds and prepare an edible garden. We enjoyed dressing up for World Book Day and have just had a fantastic time taking part in British Science Week. Several parents came into school to tell us about their jobs and encourage enthusiasm for the many branches of Science. Like and follow us on Facebook or Twitter to get all our news! Visits to the school are always welcome and children who have transferred in year to our school have settled well and are happy and thriving.

GIVING



CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY – LENT APPEAL

Every child should grow big and strong. Family Fast Day is Friday 11th March, a day when we eat simply and give generously to support mums around the world, like Amie in Sierra Leone, with expert training in growing and making healthy food. Your small act of love will make a big difference to many communities affected by extreme hunger and children suffering from malnutrition. You can donate in church using a CAFOD envelope or by visiting [Family Fast Day - Lent 2022 | CAFOD](#)

See also the note on Ukraine above.

CHARITY: DIDCOT

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

CHARITY: HENDRED

The Hendred Environment Group, led by Cllr Sally Povolotsky, has launched a Community Larder in the village. It both makes available excess supermarket food that would otherwise go to waste (good for the environment) and makes this food available at well below market price, without the stigma or red tape of a food bank as it's open to all for a small subscription. There are posters explaining, including one in the Church porch at St Mary's.

TO GIVE TO OUR 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 : office@hendredcatholicparish.org.uk

East Hendred Catholic Parish



Third Sunday in Lent (C) Antiphons, Prayers and Readings

Lent Prose (see Mass booklet, no. 74)

Cantor (1st time) Full

Hear us, O Lord, have mer - cy up - on us:
for we have sinn'd a - gainst thee.

Entrance Antiphon

Oculi mei

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare.
Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor. *cf Ps 25*

Collect

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever

First Reading

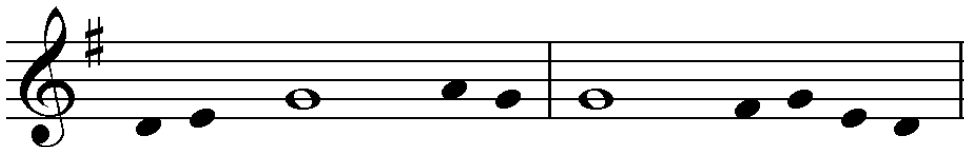
Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15 (RSV)

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Mid'ian; and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, 'I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.'

When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here am I.' Then he said, 'Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' And he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, 'I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, -and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Per'izzites, the Hivites, and the Jeb'usites. Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, 'Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Psalm 103: 1-4, 6-8, 11 R/8

Tone VIII.1



R/ () | The Lord is com-pas-sio-nate and gra-cious.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, his ho-ly name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his be-ne-fits. R/*

*It is the Lord who forgives all your sins,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with mercy and com-pas-sion. R/*

*The Lord does just deeds,
gives full justice to all who are op-pressed.
He made known his ways to Mo-ses
and his deeds to the children of Is-ra-el. R/*

*The Lord is compassionate and gra-cious,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So strong his mercy for those who fear him. R/*

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12 (RSV)

I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless with most of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did. Do not grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Gospel Acclamation



Praise to you, O Christ, King of e-ter-nal glo-ry.

R/ Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!
Repent, says the Lord,
for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.
R/ Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

Gospel

Luke 13:1-9 (RSV)

There were some present at that very time who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered thus? I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Silo'am fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.' And he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, 'Behold, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down; why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Let it alone, sir, this year also, till I dig about it and put on manure. And if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'

Apostles' Creed (see *Mass booklet*, page 6)

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbour. Through Christ our Lord.

Preface*(De spiritali significatione Quadragesimæ)*

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 by your gracious gift each year your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure, so that, more eagerly intent on prayer and on the works of charity, and participating in the mysteries by which they have been reborn, they may be led to the fullness of grace that you bestow on your sons and daughters. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy &c.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION*after St Alphonsus Liguori (18th cent.)*

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Even 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.

Communion Antiphon*Passer invenit sibi domum*

The sparrow find a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise. *Cf Ps 84*

Prayer after Communion

As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion. Through Christ our Lord.

Scripture Reading**(Lent Week 3)****Monday**

2 Kings 5:1-15

Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday

Daniel 3:25, 34-43

Matthew 18:21-35

Wednesday

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday

Jeremiah 7:23-28

Luke 11:14-23

Friday

Hosea 14:2-10

Mark 12:28-34

Saturday

Hosea 5:15 – 6:6

Luke 18:9-14

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT (C)**Joshua 5:9-12****2 Corinthians 5:17-21****Luke 15:1-3, 11-32**

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

21st – 27th March 2022

Monday 21st March

Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever

Reading

Luke 4:24-30 (RSV)

Like Elijah and Elisha, Jesus is not sent only to the Jews

Jesus [came to Nazareth and speaking to the people in the synagogue] said, 'Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. ²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli'jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; ²⁶ and Eli'jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar'ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli'sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'aman the Syrian.' ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. ³⁰ But passing through the midst of them he went away.

Reflection

In today's Gospel, Jesus explains that the Gospel is for a wider audience than his own people – the locals of Nazareth and Israel. As Simeon foretold at the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the child is destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel. He is the Light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of his own people. Jesus' homily enrages the synagogue congregation and they want to kill him. Interesting that Jesus makes his point about the prophet not being acceptable in his own country by referring to two old stories. One concerns the prophet Elijah who (1 Kings 17:14) ministers to a widow from near Sidon – not therefore an Israelite – and the other the prophet Elisha who in today's first reading (2 Kings 5:1-15) heals Naaman, a Syrian army commander, of leprosy.

These stories from the ninth century BC – the famine in Elijah's time and the problem of leprosy in the time of Elisha, on whom the mantle of Elijah fell – have an urgent modern relevance. Our problems, in this part of the world, don't include famine – whatever the queuing shopping trollies outside supermarkets suggest – but we are beset by the fear of disease. My guess is that many who become socially isolated at this time will join with the verses from Psalm 42 and 43, set as today's psalm.

Tuesday 22nd March

Reading

Matthew 18:21-35 (RSV)

Forgiveness and the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²¹ Peter came up and said to Jesus, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' ²² Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. ²³ Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; ²⁵ and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a

hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; ³³ and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.'

Reflection

TODAY'S Gospel follows on from a few verses about how, in the Early Church, someone who sins can be reconciled with the community. That reconciliation is a three-step procedure, involving, first, one-on-one reconciliation, then, if that does not work, reconciliation effected with the help of two or three witnesses, and finally the gathered Church community. If that fails, then exclusion follows. We are talking about personal relationships and estrangements and Peter, on behalf of the disciples, asks how often reconciliation has to be pursued. We are not sure whether the term he uses is the word here translated 'seventy times seven' is 490 or merely 77. Nor can we be sure about how much 10,000 talents is. The amount probably means what today we might refer to as a billion pounds, and, since we are talking about personal debts in this parable, the exact amount is not important. The lesser sum of one hundred denarii is more exact. It is the amount of money a labourer would earn in a hundred days, a denarius being, roughly, a day's wage. So, a significant debt but not a breath-taking amount. Jesus is teaching his disciples to learn that reconciliation with each other ought to be manageable since the debt is so small compared with the forgiveness offered by our heavenly Father to us.

Wednesday 23rd March

Reading

Deuteronomy 4:1-9 (RSV)

Take notice of the laws and observe them

Moses said to the people, 'And now, O Israel, give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which I teach you, and do them; that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, gives you. ²You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it; that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ³Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Ba'al-pe'or; for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Ba'al of Pe'or; ⁴but you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive this day. ⁵Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?

⁹'Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

Reflection

Today's passage from Deuteronomy appears to suggest that those who perish are those who, like the Israelites who chased after foreign gods at Baal-peor. Apostasy brings death. This is a dangerous thought for us at a time of plague. In fact, the reading at Mass omits the difficult verses 2-4. Jesus himself deals with this question. In Luke 13:4 he has this to say:

Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Silo'am fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem?

He is clearly referring to a contemporary event, and speaking to disciples, troubled much as we are by the terrible events impacting on innocent men, women and children in Ukraine, not to mention young Russian conscripts.

What Moses is referring too principally is the link between Life and Fidelity. God is faithful to his promises and to those who love him. This teaching is further developed by Jesus in St John's Gospel, where he links abundant life with following him and abiding in his Love (John 15:9-10).

St Paul gives us a ringing reassurance of God's love in his letter to the Romans (8:37-39).

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Mother Julian of Norwich, the remarkable fourteenth century mystic, said the same thing in her *Revelations of Divine Love*:

**'All shall be well, and all shall be well
and all manner of thing shall be well.'**

Thursday 24th March

Reading

Luke 11;14-23 (RSV)

Jesus and Be-el'zebul

¹⁴ Now Jesus was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marvelled. ¹⁵ But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Be-el'zebul, the prince of demons'; ¹⁶ while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. ¹⁷ But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and house falls upon house. ¹⁸ And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul. ¹⁹ And if I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁰ But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons,

then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²¹ When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; ²² but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armour in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. ²³ He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Reflection

THE SETTING for the Gospel is Jesus' teaching his disciples about prayer. He then casts out a mute – that is, a deaf and dumb demon and the deaf and dumb person spoke. Two groups of onlookers commented: one commented that he was casting out demons by Beelzebul, the name of a Canaanite god used as a synonym for Satan; the other tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. We learn from this encounter how the kingdom of God is structured. The work of the Gospel is not through coercion but through the patient work of healing and exorcism. The strong man in the sayings has a palace and is heavily armed. If he is vigilant, everything seems safe. But there is a yet stronger one – Jesus is mightier than Satan – and we need to take sides. Jesus tells us that none who play their part in working for the common good are on the side of evil. Yet whoever does not congregate with Jesus is against him. One of the reasons we come together to worship is to congregate with Jesus as well as each other and thereby actively to choose to belong to him.

ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Thursday 25th 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

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

³²He 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, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I have no husband?' ³⁵And 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.

³⁶And 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. ³⁷For with God nothing will be impossible.' ³⁸And 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 25th 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-occurred 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, 5th 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 25th March. In the West, when 25th March falls during Holy Week or the Easter Octave, the Annunciation is transferred to a later date. In the East, however, the co-occurrence 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.

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APPENDIX Psalm 31 (Revised Grail)

1 A Psalm of David

- 2 In you, LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness deliver me;
- 3 incline your ear to me;
make haste to rescue me!
Be my rock of refuge,
a stronghold to save me.
- 4 For you are my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me.
- 5 Free me from the net they have set for me,
for you are my refuge.
- 6 Into your hands I commend my spirit;
you will redeem me, LORD, God of truth.
- 7 You hate those who serve worthless idols,
but I trust in the LORD.
- 8 I will rejoice and be glad in your mercy,
once you have seen my misery,
[and] got to know the distress of my soul.
- 9 You will not abandon me into enemy hands,
but will set my feet in a free and open space.

II

- 10 Be gracious to me, LORD, for I am in distress;
affliction is wearing down my eyes,
my throat and my insides.
- 11 My life is worn out by sorrow,
and my years by sighing.
My strength fails in my affliction;
my bones are wearing down.
- 12 To all my foes I am a thing of scorn,
and especially to my neighbours
a horror to my friends.
When they see me in public,
they quickly shy away.
- 13 I am forgotten, out of mind like the dead;
I am like a worn-out tool.

- 14 I hear the whispers of the crowd;
terrors are all around me.
They conspire together against me;
they plot to take my life.
- 15 But I trust in you, LORD;
I say, 'You are my God.'
- 16 My destiny is in your hands;
rescue me from my enemies,
from the hands of my pursuers.
- 17 Let your face shine on your servant;
save me in your mercy.
- 18 Do not let me be put to shame,
for I have called to you, LORD.
Put the wicked to shame;
reduce them to silence in Sheol.
- 19 Strike dumb their lying lips,
which speak arrogantly against the righteous
in contempt and scorn.

III

- 20 How great is your goodness, Lord,
stored up for those who fear you.
You display it for those who trust you,
in the sight of the children of Adam.
- 21 You hide them in the shelter of your presence,
safe from scheming enemies.
You conceal them in your tent,
away from the strife of tongues.
- 22 Blessed be the LORD,
marvellously he showed to me
his mercy in a fortified city.
- 23 Though I had said in my alarm,
'I am cut off from your eyes.'
Yet you heard my voice, my cry for mercy,
when I pleaded with you for help.
- 24 Love the LORD, all you who are faithful to him.
The LORD protects the loyal,
but repays the arrogant in full.
- 25 Be strong and take heart,
all who hope in the LORD.