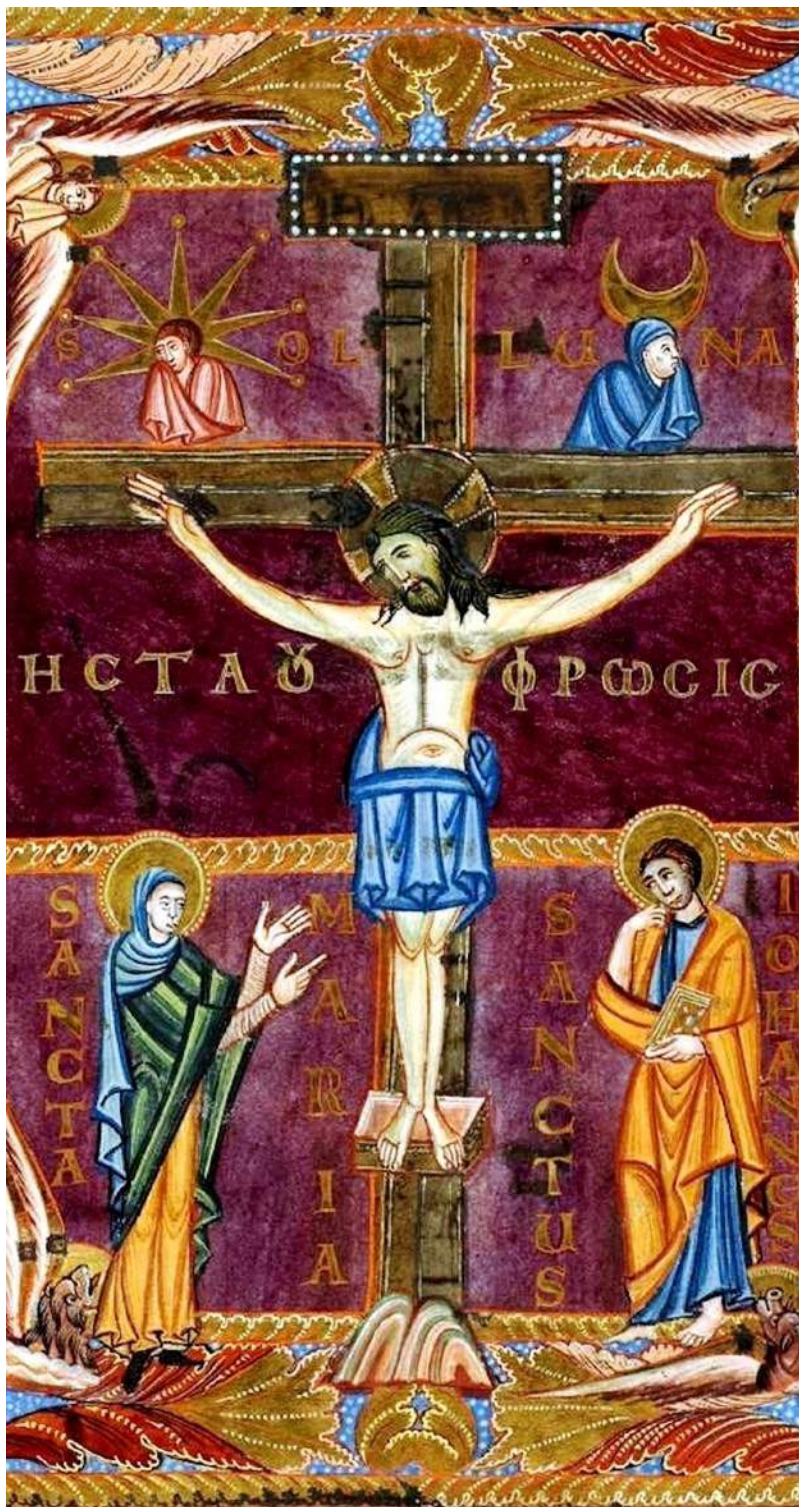


HIGH TIDE

*Parish
Magazine*

*Weymouth
St Paul
with Fleet*

MAY 2025



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I have to disappoint you if you were looking for the newest parish gossip in this article... Instead, you will find some curious facts of general knowledge!

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In the Old Testament God invites his people to call him by various names. The “God of Joy and Gladness” is not one of them—but Irene takes a bit of a linguistic-biblical journey, and following biblical patterns, comes up with a Hebrew version of this name.

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One of the incenses we use at St. Paul’s comes from Gerald’s friend, Stephen Cordina in Malta. He has studied many early historical aspects of perfumery back to recipes found in hieroglyphics on the temple walls of Egypt, going back over 4000 years. From these hieroglyphs, he has created the incense we use today.

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Have you ever wondered about the origins of the shrine? Or what did the first Holy House look like? What happened to the statue that was kept there? How did the village react to Henry VIII’s order? This, and more, in the article!

<u>The Litanies of Our Lady: The Litany of Loreto</u>	<u>14</u>
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During May, a month dedicated to Mary, we pray these litanies every Wednesday and Saturday after Mass. Some invocations are easy to understand: Mother of Christ, Queen of Angels, etc. But what do invocations such as “Tower of Ivory”, “Mystical Rose” or “Singular Vessel of Devotion” mean? You can find some simple explanations in this article.

<u>Reclaiming the Sacristy as a Place of Prayer and Preparation</u>	<u>16</u>
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Silence is not easy. Indeed, most churches are becoming noisy and busy both before and after divine service. This article, written for an important liturgical blog, argues for silence in the sacristy but the principle must be applied to our churches too. The way of rediscovering God’s presence and the power of prayer leads through silence.

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We prayerfully remember the dead and pray for the needs of this world.

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Because without the Lord Jesus (prayer!) we can do nothing (John 15,5) and also so that we are (or become) united in prayer!

A few short and beautiful prayers to the Holy Spirit from our Eastern brethren to help our preparation for the great Feast of Pentecost.

The icon of Pentecost and its interpretation

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Orthodox icons are not about art only. They are theological master pieces just as our medieval frescos were. They tell a story and they teach the doctrine that comes with it. Everything in it - and in the case of Pentecost icons even what is missing! - has an important message.

Irene Leader: Ascension

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"My yoke is easy" — a quote from St. Matthew's Gospel we have heard so often. But is this our common experience? Is it truly so: is Christ's yoke always easy? Well, it depends on how we see it, how we bend our neck into it...

Feast of the month: Finding of the Holy Cross

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Some history, a few legends and a lot of Tuscan art in this article about the Holy Cross. Remember, here at St. Paul's we have the Relic of the True Cross and twice a year (3 May & 14 September) you can receive a blessing with it after Mass.

Know the Bible

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We look into the second Book of Samuel (in reality, the two books are one and have been divided for practical reasons only: they didn't fit on one scroll) where David, after a great start, makes some huge mistakes and commits some grave sins. And yet, God remains faithful to his promise: from David's House will the Saviour be born!

Psalm 48: The city of God

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"As we have heard, so we have seen it!" God's glory as experienced by his worshipping faithful.

Symbols of Early Christian Art: the Crucifix

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The first article of a new series: the symbols of early Christian art. In this article we look at scenes of crucifixion which appear in Christian art surprisingly late! Very, very late!

*Many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the Parish Magazine and to Liz Evans for the proofreading. The next Magazine will be published on **Sunday 1st June**. Please, send all articles, information, news you wish to be publish by Sunday 25th May.*

Front cover: "Crucifixion" (from: Sacramentary of Henry II, codex)
Unknown (ca. 1002); Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (Germany)

From the Vicar

Dearly Beloved,

The late Roman Pontiff, Francis, referring to his then still future death, once said, “The Church moves on, and I am only one step in her course.” The Church indeed is already moving on with the preparations for the conclave. As the Romans say, “Morto un Papa, se ne fa un altro - When a Pope dies, another is made”, stressing the continuity of the Church.

Today, Saturday the 26th, as I am writing this letter, starts the antique tradition of Novendial: nine days of mourning for the late Supreme Pontiff. Here, at St. Paul’s, we will offer Mass for the rest of his immortal soul as he now gives account of his life to his Creator. With great trepidation we remember the words of Our Saviour: *“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded”* (Lk 12,48).

At the same time we also raise our prayers to God for a new Pope who, after twelve years of this pontificate, will bring much needed unity, healing and clarity of doctrine again.

On a much smaller scale, and certainly in a less definite way for now, I, too, have been experiencing the “church moves on - I am only one step” feeling. And I haste to add: in a very positive way. Most of you know about Chris’s accident that happened on Good Friday and the major surgery in Southampton we are waiting for. This, of course, meant that I had to step back a little bit from our daily parish life. I still keep an eye on everything — nothing can stop the incoming, constant flow of emails!! — to make sure that liturgical and pastoral provisions are in place and administrative and financial obligations are met. But that is literally all I have to do: to keep an eye on things. I am very pleased and proud to see how people are stepping up, showing great dedication to our parish. I want to use this occasion to thank them all.

This dedication, however, demonstrates another important fact too. Yes, we all are only one small step in the course of the life of the Church (or of the parish, in our case), but even one step can make dramatic changes. Just imagine hiking in the mountains—the right step means safety, it means arriving home, and it means exploring new beauties. But make one wrong step and you may cause a lot of hurt and injury to yourself or to others. Also, it is the “one steps” that add together into an exciting journey. Decide not to take that “one step”, and you will get nowhere...

Compared to many churches and their numbers, we are doing rather well. Compared to many others, we are not. We are still in time - though

perhaps not for much longer - to decide to make that one step: to step up, to take responsibility, to put our life into the service of the parish and of the Church (and, ultimately, of God himself). In 50-60 years' time (and don't we all know how quickly a few decades can pass by), very few of us, if any, will be still here. There is no question about that. The question is: will St. Paul's still be here? And the answer, other than in God's providence and will, of course, lies in that "one step" we are called to become. One step, made at the right time, in the right direction.

Let us then:

- ***make Sunday an absolute priority again*** — not only is it a powerful witness if we put God in absolute first place, even before family (Mt 10,37) (*naturally, the duty of care for the sick has a priority*), but where else could we ever find the necessary grace to move forward if not in worship and the Sacraments;
- ***revisit our prayer life*** — without a living relationship with God, we can do nothing (Jn 15,5); if there be a need, let us ask for advice and help;
- ***live in charity with all*** — he who does not love his neighbour abides in death (1 Jn 3,14) and dead people will make no steps...;
- ***learn about our faith*** — we have been created to know, to love and to serve God (Catechism), in this exact order. No one can love what they do not know, and no service is worthy of God without love. Choose a group, course, book, or parish magazine article, or ask for advice. If we are not interested in and passionate about our faith, why/how would others be?!
- ***give generously*** — revisit your giving of time, money and dedication. We need all three.
- ***transform this parish into God's family*** — you don't choose your family; you accept them, and you learn to love them with their faults. Let us participate in parish events, pray for each other and be there for each other, embracing others with their faults as they embrace us with ours.

May is dedicated to Our Blessed Lady, whom the Lord, from the Cross, gave us as Mother. Ask her to pray for you, and you pray with her more fervently in this month. Find forms of Marian devotion (litanies, rosary, candles lit in her honour) that are meaningful for you—and if you cannot, then simply learn to find meaning in one of them. May Mary's motherly love and care, through her prayers and yours, bring us all closer to Christ and to each other.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am,
ever yours in Christ,

Fr. Gregory⁵

Did you know?

Jeanne James writes:

1. The leech has 32 brains.
2. Horses and cows sleep standing up.
3. The bat is the only mammal capable of flight, its leg bones are so thin it cannot walk.
4. Even when a snake's eyes are closed it can still see through its eyelids.
5. Despite their fluffy white fur Polar Bears actually have black skin.
6. The average house fly lives only 2 to 3 weeks.
7. For every human there are approximately one million ants.
8. A small amount of alcohol on a scorpion will drive it insane and cause it to sting itself to death.
9. Alligators and sharks can live up to 100 years.
10. A honey bee has 2 stomachs, one for honey and one for food.
11. An elephant weighs less than the tongue of a blue whale.
12. A blue whale's heart is the size of a car.
13. A cockroach can survive for about a week without its head before dying of starvation.
14. When a dolphin is sick or injured, its cries of distress prompt other dolphins to assist, helping it surface to breathe.
15. A snail can sleep for up to 3 years.
16. The bird known as the Spine Tailed Swift can fly at speeds of up to 106 miles per hour. (A peregrine falcon can fly at 108 miles per hour).
17. A cow produces 200,000 glasses of milk in her life lifetime.
18. Birds do not urinate.
19. The average outdoor cat lives only 3 years while indoor cats can live 16 years or longer.
20. Sharks are immune to every disease including cancer.
21. A mosquito's proboscis has 47 sharp edges to help it cut through skin and even protective clothing.
22. The human brain has a memory capacity of over 2.55 million gigabytes.

The God of my joy and gladness?

Irene Leader writes:

In the Bible, God “presents himself” under various names. Sometimes these names are relational, that is they reveal who is God for his people. More often, God’s self-revealed names refer to one of his characteristics. On other occasions, God allows or even invites his people to call him by a name that reflects who God is for them.

“*This joyful Easter-tide*” I thought that, following biblical examples, I would “create” a name for God, to use in my prayers, a name specifically in relation to joy and gladness.

In Greek, *khara* (χαρά) translates to joy, gladness, or delight and is of general joy and gladness. In John 15,11 we have a more specific use of the same word. Jesus speaks about his joy at keeping his Father’s commandments and prays that this joy might remain in us as well so that we may be filled with joy. I interpret this as a joy that we experience by being “in Christ.” In him we experience Christ’s closeness to his Father, and through him we can experience, to some extent, that same closeness and consequent joy.

In Hebrew we have several words for “joy.” One of them is *sameach* שמח and, similarly to the Greek *khara*, it is a general joy. Some examples of its usage in the Bible: “lift up your voice with joy”; “there was great joy in Jerusalem”; “they experienced joy because they understood”; or any other reference when joy is expressed in singing, dancing, or music.

Another word for “joy” in Hebrew is *chedvah* חֵדְוָה. It is used twice in the Bible. 1 Chron 16,27 (“*gladness in his place*”) and Neh 8,10 (“*The joy of God is your strength*”). Unlike the more general *sameach*, *chedvah* is an abiding joy and gladness which only can derive from a relationship with God.

Both the Hebrew *sameach* and the Greek *khara* (when used in a general sense) seem to be an emotional response to doing something. On the other hand, *chedvah* and the *khara* in John 15,11 are a genuine internal state of the heart from a closeness to God.

Originally, I had thought that because of examples such as *JHWH Tsidkenu* (meaning “*the God of my Righteousness*”) I could say *JHWH Chedvah*.

But JHWH is only used in Covenant Names of God he himself revealed. This is not the case so using JHWH would not be appropriate. Instead, *El* or its plural, *Elohim*, (meaning “God” and “God of gods”) might be more correct. This would also follow Jesus’ when expressing his closeness to his Father.

In my prayers, then, I can use *El Chedvah: the God of my joy and gladness*.

Bells and smells

Gerald Duke writes:



At St Paul's, we like our smells. One of the incenses we use is called Kyphi Bakhoor and is made by my good friend Stephen Cordina in Malta. (StephenCordina.com) Stephen is an accomplished perfumier and one of a small handful of overseas members of the Grasse Institute of Perfumery in France.

He has studied many early historical aspects of perfumery back to recipes found in hieroglyphics on the temple walls of Egypt, going back over 4000 years. From these hieroglyphs, he has created the incense we use today.

Ancient texts, particularly those found in the temples of Edfu and Philae, detail the meticulous preparation of this sacred incense. These inscriptions reveal that kyphi was not merely a pleasant aroma, but a carefully crafted offering, a tangible manifestation of devotion. The creation of kyphi was a sacred act, undertaken by priests and artisans who possessed specialised knowledge of the ingredients and their symbolic meanings. I may be tempted to go into these details in another article. The complexity of its composition, often involving sixteen or more substances, underscores the dedication and expertise required to produce this precious blend.

The ingredients of kyphi varied depending on the specific recipe and purpose, but certain elements remained consistently present. Resins, such as frankincense and myrrh, were fundamental, their aromatic smoke symbolizing purification and connection to the gods. Honey and wine, representing sustenance and abundance, were often incorporated, along with raisins, adding sweetness and depth to the blend. Juniper, known for its purifying properties, was believed to ward off evil spirits, while cinnamon and cassia, with their warm and stimulating scents, were associated with the sun and divine energy. Other common ingredients included sweet rush (cyperus), aspalathos, cedarwood, mastic, and various gums and herbs, each contributing its unique fragrance and symbolic value.

The spiritual significance of kyphi permeated every aspect of ancient Egyptian life. It was primarily used in temple rituals, particularly during evening ceremonies, when the setting sun symbolised the transition between the earthly and divine realms. The burning of kyphi was believed to create a

sacred space, a bridge between mortals and the gods. The fragrant smoke was thought to carry prayers and offerings to the deities, facilitating communication and fostering a sense of connection. Moreover, kyphi was used for purification, both of physical spaces and of individuals. Its aromatic smoke was believed to cleanse away negative energies, restoring harmony and balance.

Beyond its ritualistic use, kyphi also played a role in personal fragrance and medicinal practices. The ancient Egyptians recognized the therapeutic properties of its ingredients, using it to soothe ailments and promote well-being in homes and temples.

It was a potent symbol of ancient Egyptian spirituality, a testament to their deep reverence for the natural world and their profound connection to the divine. Kyphi serves as a window into a world where scent was not merely a sensory experience, but a sacred language, a means of communicating with the gods and navigating the complexities of existence.

There was a gradual transition of the use of Kyphi to other nations and traditions. As ancient Egyptian culture interacted with other civilisations, knowledge of kyphi and its ingredients spread.

The Greeks, in particular, were influenced by Egyptian practices, and they documented kyphi in their writings. In past articles, I have looked at the influence of Greek traditions in John's Gospel. The Gospel itself does not contain descriptions of incense being used but the broader context of John's writings in the Book of Revelation, does include significant references to incense. Specifically, Revelation 5:8 and Revelation 8:3-4 depict scenes where incense is associated with the prayers of the saints. These passages highlight the symbolic connection between incense and prayer, with the smoke of the incense representing the ascent of prayers to God.

In these passages, incense is used symbolically, representing the prayers of the faithful rising to God. This symbolism is rooted in ancient Jewish traditions, where incense was used in temple worship.

While a direct, widespread adoption of kyphi or incense into formal Catholic Church liturgy is not historically documented as far as I can assess. The use of incense in the Catholic church is mainly for the purpose of purification, honour and creating a sacred atmosphere. The broader use of incense in religious ceremonies demonstrates the enduring significance of aromatic substances in spiritual traditions which has roots in ancient Egyptian traditions and continues to play a role in religious ceremonies.



A brief history of Walsingham

The Holy House — According to the Pynson ballad of 1465, in 1061, when St. Edward the Confessor was still King of England, the lady of the manor of Little Walsingham in Norfolk, a widow named Richeldis, prayed to our Lady asking how she could honour her in some special way. In answer to this prayer Mary led Richeldis in spirit to Nazareth and showed her the house in which she had first received the angel's message. Mary told Richeldis to take the measurements of this house and build another one just like it in Walsingham. It would be a place where people could come to honour her and her Son, remembering especially the mystery of the Annunciation and Mary's joyful 'yes' to conceiving the Saviour.

But Richeldis had a problem. Where should she build? She noticed that overnight there had been a heavy dew, but two patches of ground were quite dry. Surely one of these must be the site for the house. She chose one, but the building work was beset with problems. Richeldis spent a night in prayer, and the next morning found that the building had been miraculously moved to the other dry spot.

Although the Shrine itself was destroyed in the sixteenth century we know a great deal about how the Holy House looked in the Middle-Ages. The House was small – measuring 23ft.6in by 12ft.10in – made of wood and with a narrow door on each side. Later it was surrounded by a larger outer building, leaving the House itself dark inside, lit only by candles, with gold, silver and jewels glittering in the candlelight. To one side of the altar stood a famous statue of Our Lady.

England's Nazareth — The late eleventh century and all through the twelfth and thirteenth century was the era of the crusades, which saw a growing interest in the sites consecrated by the human presence of Jesus in the Holy Land. But now pilgrims need not go so far; in England itself there was a 'new Nazareth' built by one of their own countrywomen.

In 1346 the canons of Walsingham reported that owing to the great value of the jewels and other offerings at the shrine the priory gates had to be locked at night...

In 1513 Erasmus visited Walsingham and described the shrine as being surrounded "*on all sides with gems, gold and silver.*" He also added that the water from the Walsingham Spring was "*efficacious in curing pains of the head and stomach.*" It is thanks to him that we have a detailed description of the Holy House. He wrote: "*When you look in you would say it is the abode of saints, so brilliantly does it shine on all sides with gems, gold and silver [...]* Our Lady stands in the

dark at the right side of the altar [...] a little image, remarkable neither for its size, material or workmanship."

As for the larger context, the Holy House' was located at the right of the high altar in the Priory Church in a small, unfinished, separate building, 'made of wainscot' on a platform. Dark inside and lit with wax-lights, the jewels, gold and silver blazed and made it 'dazzling' and 'worthy of saints.' It was guarded by one of the Augustinian canons because of earlier attempted surreptitious thefts by pilgrims from the collecting box.

The last famous pilgrim was Henry VIII who stayed at Barsham Manor and then walked two miles barefoot to Walsingham where he placed a "*gold circlet round Our Lady's neck*".

The Priory (or Abbey) — Richeldis' son, Geoffrey de Faverches, founded a Priory next to the Holy House. In c.1153 Augustinian canons took over the care of the site and enshrined the wooden Holy House in a special chapel within a much larger church. Pilgrims began to come from all over England and even abroad. From the time of Henry III nearly all the kings and queens of the realm visited Walsingham, as well as hundreds of ordinary people seeking help, healing and inner peace. Walsingham ranked with Rome, Jerusalem and Compostella in importance as a pilgrimage destination.

In 1347 the Franciscan Friars, under the patronage of Elizabeth de Burgh, Countess of Clare, established a small Friary on the edge of the village.

The Slipper Chapel — Built in the mid-14th century, and dedicated to St. Catherine of Alexandria, the chapel served pilgrims on their way to the Shrine. St. Catherine was the patron saint of pilgrims to the Holy Land and her knights kept open the road to Nazareth during the Crusades.

St. Catherine's tomb is in the Monastery on Mount Sinai, within the Basilica of the Annunciation. Just as on Mount Sinai, Moses took off his shoes because he was on holy ground, so the pilgrims to England's Holy Land used to remove their shoes and walk barefoot the Holy Mile into Walsingham.

After the Reformation, the Chapel was used as a poor house, a forge, a cow shed and a barn. It was restored to the Catholic Church in 1896. The first Mass since the Reformation was celebrated here in August 1934 and on 8 September 1938 the Shrine was re-consecrated.

The village — The medieval village of Walsingham developed to cater for the increasing number of pilgrims and to meet local needs. By 1252 a charter had been granted to hold a weekly market and an annual fair. At about this time the village was laid out in a 'grid' pattern. The fine medieval

timber-framed jetted buildings, still visible today, provided hostleries and shops for visiting pilgrims, as they continue to do today.

A small curiosity: in 1787 a John Howard “model” prison, for eight prisoners, was built in the village to replace an existing Elizabethan “House of Correction”. The prison was enlarged in 1822 and 5 tread wheels were added in 1823. The prison was closed in 1861. The Shirehall, Walsingham’s courtroom, is still in original 18th century condition, now a museum. You are at liberty to explore it, to sit in the dock, on the jury benches or the judge’s chair.

A post-Dissolution water pump was dedicated in the centre of the village, still seen today, in 1538, no doubt to replace a desecrated medieval cross.

The destruction of the Shrine — For nearly five hundred years Walsingham was one of the greatest pilgrimage sites in the whole of Europe. In the end, however, Henry VIII brought about the shrine’s downfall. He separated the Church of England from Rome and destroyed all the monasteries throughout the country.

In April 1537 the king gave instructions to remove the wealth held at the Shrine and so in 1538 Walsingham’s treasures were taken into the king’s treasury and the shrine was closed. When a group of local men complained they were arrested and on 30 May 1537 they were hanged, beheaded and quartered. The abbot and monks variously rewarded, imprisoned or executed, depending on their willingness to cooperate with Cromwell’s agents and support the Royal Supremacy. The statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was removed to London and was publicly burnt along with other “idols”.

Soon all that remained were a few ruins from the Priory and the Slipper Chapel. The site of the original Holy House was only discovered during excavations in 1961, beside the ruins of the priory church.

Poetry, legends and ballads — The Shrine crumbled, pilgrimages were forbidden, and in the words of a ballad attributed to Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, written around 1570: “*Sinne is wher our Ladie sate, Heaven turned is to hell, / Sathan sittes wher our Lord did swaye, Walsingham oh farewell.*”

In fact, the ghost of Walsingham uncannily haunted the Elizabethan age in poems and folk songs, including the famous Walsingham Ballad (spectacularly set by Byrd, Bull and others), Ophelia’s song in *Hamlet* 4.5, and the strange and extraordinarily haunting poem by Raleigh, “As you came from the Holy Land,” and Robert Sidney’s Sixth Song, “Yonder Comes a Sad Pilgrim.” Do Google these if you do not know them!

Revival — In 1896 a Roman Catholic laywoman, Charlotte Boyd, bought the derelict Slipper Chapel and gave it to the Catholic Church. Soon the Roman Catholic Shrine of Walsingham was reinstated, with a replica of the original statue of Our Lady. By the end of the twentieth century a pilgrimage Church had been built in the grounds of the Slipper Chapel, and in 2001 the feast of Our Lady of Walsingham was added to the Church's calendar.

The Church of England also worked to restore the Shrine. In 1921, Fr. Alfred Hope Patten became the Anglican vicar of Walsingham and dedicated himself to fostering devotion to Mary. Following in the footsteps of Lady Richeldis, he built another replica of the Holy House in the village (1933-37) together with a statue modelled on that depicted on the ancient priory seal kept in the British Museum. During the building works, a Saxon well was discovered. Today Walsingham is the national Marian shrine for both Churches and is again England's Nazareth.

Abbey Grounds — Remodelled in the early 19th century, the Abbey house sits in a classic English landscape, reminiscent of Repton, with garden features of the 1800s created from scattered medieval ruins. The Abbey Grounds are also renowned for the swathes of naturalised snowdrops filling the woodland garden from late January into February.

Superstition: Milky Way — Erasmus reports that the Priory kept an “*incredibly prestigious relic*”: a vial of the Virgin's breastmilk. For this reason, another name for the road pilgrims took to reach Walsingham was “Milky Way”. The “relic” attracted special attacks from the Reformers later (quite rightly so) and greatly contributed to the destruction of the Shrine.

The crystal reliquary was kept on the high altar, and was believed to had been miraculously translated from the Holy Land. It contained some chalky powder — breastmilk dried over the long centuries, so the explanation went. There was a written notice next to it, describing in some detail its history and its journey from Palestine to Walsingham. Pilgrims would recite the following prayer:

O Virgin Parent, who with thy maiden breast hast deigned to give milk to thy Son Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth. We beseech thee that being purified by his blood, we may also attain that happy childhood of dove like simplicity which guiltless of malice, fraud, and deceit, earnestly desires the true milk of the Gospel, until it grows into the perfect man, to the stature of the fullness of Christ, whose happy communion thou enjoyest forever, with the Father and Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Litanies of Our Lady: the Litany of Loreto

From various sources

The word litany is derived from the Latin word *litanía*, meaning prayer of invocation or intercession. The Litany of the Blessed Virgin was originally approved in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V. It is also known as the Litany of Loreto from the famous Italian Shrine where its use is attested in the year 1558 (but its existence far antedates this year). There seems little doubt that the Litany dates from between 1150 and 1200 and was probably of Parisian origin, or its environs. Here is the explanation of some of its invocations:

Seat of Wisdom: Mary has this title in her Litany because the Son of God, called in Scripture the Word and Wisdom of God, once dwelt in her, and then, after His birth, He was carried in her arms and seated in her lap during His first years. Thus, being as it were, the human throne of Him who reigns in heaven, she is called the “Seat of Wisdom”.

Cause of Our Joy: The moment Mary’s greeting sounded in Elizabeth’s ear, the baby leapt in her womb for joy (Luke 1,44). Mary is cause of our joy in this relative sense, of course, because, under God, she gives us Jesus, the Source of all joy.

Spiritual Vessel: The noun “vessel” as used in this title imperfectly expresses the intended meaning of this invocation. The Latin “*vas*” (vessel) is used to translate the Greek term “*skeuos*” which does not only mean vessel but also instrument or tool. Thus, the expression “spiritual vessel” should be rendered as “instrument of the Holy Spirit”. Mary is both the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and dwelling place of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation. Mary received this title because she is the perfect vessel of the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in her by the fullness of His grace.

Vessel of Honour: Cardinal Newman wrote: “Mary, we praise thee as the Vessel of Honour because thou art the Mother of God. If everything in any way connected with Christ our Saviour is venerable, what an object of honour thou must be to us! As Mother of Christ, thou standest in closer relationship to Him than any other creature in heaven or on earth. Thou art a living tabernacle of God.”

Singular Vessel of Devotion: The word devotion as used in this title refers to total dedication and fidelity in the service of God. Mary’s profession of faith, “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord...,” most adequately expresses the meaning of this invocation. She was totally dedicated to her Son. Total dedication has not only the meaning of service, it refers primarily to openness and receptivity of God’s will and grace. Devotion in its true sense means a

cheerful promptness and alacrity in all that relates to God's service, in all the duties of religion, and in all the duties of life, considered as the expression of God's Will in our regard. Mary's heart was a burning thurible from which there ever ascended as an incense of sweetest fragrance, holy desires, acts of love, and praise and thanksgiving.

Mystical Rose: The rose is regarded as the queen of flowers. Goodness and holiness flower in the saints. Mary, the queen of saints, can be called then the "Mystical Rose." As the rose is considered the queen of flowers, so Mary is invoked as Queen of All Saints.

Tower of David: This is a biblical phrase from Song of Songs 4,4: "Your neck is the Tower of David, a display of trophies, a thousand bucklers hang on it, all of them worn by heroes of war". It speaks of the love of the king towards a woman which is an analogy of God's love for human soul. The verse is not only praising the woman's physical beauty but also the inner beauty of her heart. She is likened to a Tower of David on which hang the trophies of war and the different shields of the soldiers and generals. The tower is the manifestation of the virtues and glories of the Lord found among the saints who are the soldiers of Christ. Mary is the Tower of David because being full of grace and highly favoured by God, the beloved of God [cf. Lk 1,28] she is also blessed with manifold virtues.

Tower of Ivory: This is a symbol of purity. It means Mary is pure in body and soul; and because of that, she is most beloved by God: "*Your neck is like an ivory tower*" (Song of Solomon 7,4). Ivory is known for being precious and pearly white. It signifies God's love for Mary as the highly favoured one and the grace of being immaculate as She is protected by God the Father from the poison of Satan [cf. Gen 3,15].

House of Gold: This is an ancient biblical symbol related to the temple of God in Jerusalem, which God Himself commanded to be covered with gold so that it would be worthy to be His dwelling place on earth. Mary was the temple of God; her womb "housed" the Lord. She is the "House of Gold."

Morning Star: This is the star which precedes the rising of the Sun just as Mary preceded the coming of the Son of God. And just as the Morning Star precedes the sun, announcing the dawn of day, so the Blessed Virgin Mary preceded Christ the Son of Justice, announcing the day of salvation. Through Her coming, the whole world was enlightened. Mary was truly the bright Morning Star of that blissful day when the world saw the divine sun of its redemption arise upon it.

Reclaiming the Sacristy as a Place of Prayer and Preparation

(This article, published on “New Liturgical Movement” website in 2008 without name, talks specifically about the sacristy but most of it can and should be applied to the main church building, too, especially before and after services.)

The title of this piece might sound foreign precisely because the present culture of many sacristies has taken on an atmosphere of a work room and visiting room. It is not an uncommon sight (or sound) for the servers to be visiting, for laity to be coming in and out to catch up with the priest, for priests to be visiting with one another and so forth. Commonly heard are discussions surrounding sporting events, work, the weather, or practical parish discussion and so on. No doubt most of us have ourselves participated in this very same activity over the years to at least some extent — I can certainly include myself in this.

In a culture that is devoid of silence and inclined more to external activity than interior preparation and participation, this is not a surprise; it’s a symptom. In practice what has often happened is that our sacristies have come to be viewed as merely utilitarian and divorced from the liturgy itself. They are simply seen as rooms for servers and clergy to vest — “backstage” if you will — often stripped of the ceremonial actions of vesting, devoid of vesting prayers and so on.

While socializing can be nice of course, the sacristy should ideally be, before Mass, a place of preparation; not simply material preparation but spiritual preparation. After Mass it is a place of prayerful thanksgiving for the sacred mysteries worthily offered.

Being a place of spiritual preparation for the most powerful and central act of our Faith, an atmosphere of hushed quiet, even silence, is to be observed in the sacristy. In this atmosphere the priest prays as he vests and the servers assist in the preparations for the Holy Sacrifice. Even modern liturgical norms (2002) say: “Before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence to be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.”

This commendation should be taken seriously by each of us for we should note that the atmosphere and approach we take to the sacristy can have influence upon the character of the celebration of Mass itself for priests and servers alike.

And if the sacristy is to be treated in this way, how then should we approach the church and the august Sacrifice itself?

**Calendar, Service times,
and Prayer Intentions**

Anniversaries of death

Order of Morning and Evening Prayer

Calendar for May 2025

THU	1 st	ST. PHILIP & JAMES APOSTLES	6pm
FRI	2 nd	St. Athanasius Bishop	12pm
SAT	3 rd	FINDING OF THE HOLY CROSS	9.30am
SUN	4 th	2ND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	10.30am, 4pm
MON	5 th	St. Pius V. Pope	12pm
TUE	6 th	St. Dominic Savio (Rogation Day)	9am
WED	7 th	St. Stanislaus Bishop, Martyr (Rogation Day)	10am
THU	8 th	<i>Feria</i>	6pm
FRI	9 th	St. Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop & Doctor	12pm
SAT	10 th	St. Antoninus Bishop (<i>Monthly Requiem</i>)	9.30am
SUN	11 th	3RD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	10.30am, 4pm
MON	12 th	St. Nereus & Comp., Martyrs	12pm
TUE	13 th	St. Robert Bellarmine Bishop	9am
WED	14 th	ST. JOSEPH, PATRON OF THE CHURCH	10am
THU	15 th	St. John Baptist de la Salle	6pm
FRI	16 th	St. Ubald Bishop	12pm
SAT	17 th	St. Paschal Bylon	9.30am
SUN	18 th	4TH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	10.30am, 4pm
MON	19 th	St. Peter Celestine, Pope	12pm
TUE	20 th	St. Bernardine of Siena	9am
WED	21 st	<i>Monthly Requiem</i>	10am
THU	22 nd	<i>Feria</i>	6pm
FRI	23 rd	<i>Monthly Anointing</i>	12pm
SAT	24 th	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	9.30am
SUN	25 th	5TH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	10.30am, 4pm
MON	26 th	ST. AUGUSTINE BISHOP	12pm
TUE	27 th	<i>Minor Rogation Day</i>	9am
WED	28 th	<i>Vigil & Minor Rogation Day</i>	10am
THU	29 th	ASCENSION	10am, 6pm
FRI	30 th	<i>St. Felix Pope, Martyr</i>	12pm
SAT	31 st	QUEENSHIP OF THE BL. V. MARY	9.30am

We pray for/with...

- 1st Priests and vocations - *Sarah Grainger, Maurice Galling, Richard Limb*
- 2nd Dying
- 3rd Shrine of Walsingham - *Kenneth Kemp pr., Hamish Roger Grierson*
- 4th Our Parish
- 5th For a new Pope - *Marjorie Wray, Bert Sertin, Daisy Bown*
- 6th Beechcroft & Conifers - *Joy Scriven*
- 7th Our Benefactors
- 8th Our PCC - *Jim Clothier, Gillian Hubbard*
- 9th Reconciliation in our church & in our families - *Jane Taylor*
- 10th Our Cell of O.L.W. - *Tony Hamshaw*
- 11th Our Parish - *David Thomas bp.*
- 12th The Parish of Fleet - *Paulette Gasser*
- 13th Our Choir & Organists
- 14th Persecuted Christians
- 15th Families - *Roger Pittard pr.*
- 16th Peace especially in Israel, Palestine, & Ukraine
- 17th Deeper love for the Eucharist - *Marjorie Bishop, Norman Moore*
- 18th Our Parish - *Frank Woods*
- 19th Migrants and refugees - *Carol Wilson*
- 20th Each other & for the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 21st Departed
- 22nd Our neighbourhood and its coming to Christ in faith - *Jenifer Cooper*
- 23rd The sick
- 24th The renewal of our congregations in Christ
- 25th Our Parish - *Ted Moggeridge*
- 26th Our missionary & evangelistic renewal
- 27th Our Servers
- 28th Those who hunger - *Dick Evans, Nan Evans*
- 29th Our Parish - *Janet Allen*
- 30th S.P.O.T. & volunteers
- 31st The grace of last perseverance & of a holy death - *Nigel Brown*

If there are names missing from the list or you want to add names, please, talk to the Vicar.

Open, O Lord, my mouth to bless thy holy Name; cleanse also my heart from all vain, evil, and wandering thoughts; enlighten my understanding and kindle my affections; that I may worthily, attentively, and devoutly recite this Morning Prayer, and so be meet to be heard before the presence of thy divine Majesty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

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.

V. Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world: grant, we beseech thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. O Lord, open my lips. **R.** And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

V. O God, make speed to save me. **R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

V. Let us rejoice in the Lord; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him!

R. Alleluia, the Spirit of the Lord fills the world: alleluia.

V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are his.

R. O come, let us worship Him, alleluia.

V. The sea is his, for who but he made it; and his hands fashioned the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, and weep before the Lord who made us! For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

R. Alleluia, the Spirit of the Lord fills the world: alleluia.

V. Today if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts: As in the provocation, on the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me, and put me to the test, and they saw my works.

R. O come, let us worship Him, alleluia.

V. For forty years I loathed that generation, and I said: They always err in heart, they have not known my ways, so I swore in my wrath: they shall not enter my rest.

R. Alleluia, the Spirit of the Lord fills the world: alleluia.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

R. O come, let us worship Him, alleluia.

HYMN

Eternal Monarch, King most high, Whose blood hath brought redemption nigh, By whom the death of Death was wrought And conquering grace's battle fought:	Be thou our joy and strong defence, Who art our future recompense: So shall the light that springs from thee Be ours through all eternity.
Ascending to the throne of might, And seated at the Father's right, All power in heaven is Jesu's own, That here his manhood had not known.	To thee we therefore humbly pray That thou wouldst purge our sins away, And draw our hearts by cords of grace To thy celestial dwelling-place.
That so, in nature's triple frame, Each heavenly and each earthly name, And things in hell's abyss abhorred, May bend the knee and own him Lord.	So when the judgement day shall come, And all must rise to meet their doom, Thou wilt remit the debts we owe, And our lost crowns again bestow.
Yea, angels tremble when they see How changed is our humanity; That flesh hath purged what flesh had stained, And God, the flesh of God, hath reigned.	O risen Christ, ascended Lord, All praise to thee let earth accord, Who art, while endless ages run, With Father and with Spirit One. Amen.

The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:

1	Psalm 139	Proverbs 4,10-18 James 1,1-12	6	17	Deuteronomy 5,22-end Ephesians 1,15-end
2	8	Deuteronomy 4,15-31 John 21,15-19	7	19	Deuteronomy 6 Ephesians 2,1-10
3	14	Deuteronomy 4,32-40 John 21,20-end	8	20	Deuteronomy 7,1-11 Ephesians 2,11-end
4	80 v. 1-8	Exodus 15,1-2 & 9-18 John 10,1-19	9	21	Deuteronomy 7,12-end Ephesians 3,1-13
5	15	Deuteronomy 5,1-22 Ephesians 1,1-14	10	23	Deuteronomy 8 Ephesians 3,14-end

11	146	1 Kings 17,17-end Luke 7,11-23	22	42	Deuteronomy 19 1 Peter 2,11-end
12	27	Deuteronomy 9,1-21 Ephesians 4,1-16	23	43	Deuteronomy 21,22-end 1 Peter 3,1-12
13	28	Deuteronomy 9,23-end Ephesians 4,17-end	24	44	Deuteronomy 24,5-end 1 Peter 3,13-end
14	25, 147	Isaiah 11,1-10 Matthew 13,54-end	25	40 v. 1-9	Genesis 1,26-28 Colossians 3,1-11
15	30	Deuteronomy 11,8-end Ephesians 5,15-end	26	48	Deuteronomy 26 1 Peter 4,1-11
16	31	Deuteronomy 12,1-14 Ephesians 6,1-9	27	50	Deuteronomy 28,1-14 1 Peter 4,12-end
17	32	Deuteronomy 15,1-18 Ephesians 6,10-end	28	51	Deuteronomy 28,58-end 1 Peter 5
18	16	2 Samuel 7,4-13 Acts 22-32	29	110	Isaiah 52,7-end Hebrews 7,26-end
19	34	Deuteronomy 16,1-20 1 Peter 1,1-12	30	54	Deuteronomy 29,2-15 1 John 1
20	36	Deuteronomy 17,8-end 1 Peter 1,13-end	31	98, 138	Isaiah 7,10-15 Luke 11,27-28
21	41	Deuteronomy 18,9-end 1 Peter 2,1-10			

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTUS

Ant: Send forth your Spirit, alleluia, and you shall renew the face of the earth, alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, *
who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, *
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old *
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,
To show mercy to our ancestors, *
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, *
world without end. Amen.

Ant: Send forth your Spirit, alleluia, and you shall renew the face of the earth, alleluia, alleluia.

*V. Let us pray. — **Intercessions** are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (the world), for those in need, and for the dead. Then follows the Collect:*

Grant, we beseech you, almighty God: that we, who believe your only-begotten Son, our Redeemer, to have ascended into heaven, may also ourselves dwell in mind amid heavenly things. Through the same Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

V. The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. **R.** Amen. **V.** Let us bless the Lord, alleluia, alleluia. **R.** Thanks be to God,

alleluia, alleluia. **V.** And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. **R.** Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

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.

V. Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world: grant, we beseech thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. O God, make speed to save me.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

HYMN

Come, Thou holy Paraclete,
And from Thy celestial seat
Send Thy light and brilliancy:

Father of the poor, draw near;
Giver of all gifts, be here;
Come, the soul's true radiancy.

Come, of comforters the best,
Of the soul the sweetest guest,
Come in toil refreshingly:

Thou in labour rest most sweet,
Thou art shadow from the heat,
Comfort in adversity.

O Thou Light, most pure and blest,
Shine within the inmost breast
Of Thy faithful company.

Where Thou art not, man hath nought;
Every holy deed and thought
Comes from Thy divinity.

What is soiled, make Thou pure;
What is wounded, work its cure;
What is parchèd, fructify;

What is rigid, gently bend;
What is frozen, warmly tend;
Strengthen what goes erringly.

Fill Thy faithful, who confide
In Thy power to guard and guide,
With Thy sevenfold mystery.

Here Thy grace and virtue send:
Grant salvation to the end,
And in Heav'n felicity. Amen.

The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:

1	Psalms 149	Job 23,1-12 John 1,43-end	17	64	Exodus 40,17-end Luke 4,31-37
2	40	Exodus 18,1-12 Colossians 3,12-end	18	98	Deuteronomy 32,15-47 1 John 4,1-6
3	45	Exodus 18,13-end Colossians 4	19	65	Numbers 9,15-end Luke 4,38-end
4	86	Isaiah 38,9-20 John 11,27-44	20	66	Numbers 11,1-33 Luke 5,1-11
5	46	Exodus 19 Luke 1,1-25	21	67	Numbers 12 Luke 5,12-26
6	47	Exodus 20,1-21 Luke 1,26-38	22	69	Numbers 13,17-end Luke 5,27-end
7	49	Exodus 24 Luke 1,39-56	23	72	Numbers 14,1-25 Luke 6,1-11
8	52	Exodus 25,1-22 Luke 1,57-end	24	74	Numbers 14,26-end Luke 6,12-26
9	53	Exodus 28,29-38 Luke 2,1-20	25	126, 127	Zephaniah 3, 14-end Matthew 28
10	58	Exodus 29,1-9 Luke 2,21-40	26	80	Numbers 16,1-35 Luke 6,27-38
11	113, 114	Isaiah 63,7-14 Luke 24,36-49	27	81	Numbers 16,36-end Luke 6,39-end
12	59	Exodus 32,1-14 Luke 2,41-end	28	15, 24	2 Samuel 23,1-5 Colossians 2,20-end
13	60	Exodus 32,15-34 Luke 3,1-14	29	8	2 Kings 2,1-15 Revelation 5
14	1, 112	Genesis 50,22-end Matthew 2,13-end	30	82	Numbers 20,1-13 Luke 7,11-17
15	61	Exodus 34,1-10 Luke 4,1-13	31	84	Song of Solomon 2,1-7 Revelation 12,1-5
16	62	Exodus 36,1-7 Luke 4,14-30			

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

MAGNIFICAT

Ant: I will not leave you orphans, alleluia; I go away, and come again unto you, alleluia, and your heart shall rejoice, alleluia.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,+
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;*
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed;+
the Almighty has done great things for me*
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,*
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm*
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
Casting down the mighty from their thrones*
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things*
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,*
to remember his promise of mercy,
The promise made to our ancestors,*
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Ant: I will not leave you orphans, alleluia; I go away, and come again unto you, alleluia, and your heart shall rejoice, alleluia.

V. Let us pray. — ***Intercessions** are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (world), for those in need, our Benefactors, and for the dead. Then the Collect is said:*

Grant, we beseech you, almighty God: that we, who believe your only-begotten Son, our Redeemer, to have ascended into heaven, may also ourselves dwell in mind amid heavenly things. Through the same Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

V. Let us bless the Lord, alleluia, alleluia.

R. Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Optional private prayer to be said after Evening Prayer: To the Most Holy and undivided Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, to the fruitful Virginity of the most blessed and most glorious Mary, always a Virgin, and to the holiness of all the Saints be ascribed everlasting praise, honour, and glory, by all creatures, and to us be granted the forgiveness of all our sins, world without end. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (NOVENA PRAYER)

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, before ascending into heaven, didst promise to send the Holy Ghost to finish Thy work in the souls of Thy Apostles and Disciples, deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to me, that He may perfect in my soul the work of Thy grace and Thy love.

Grant me the Spirit of Wisdom that I may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal; the Spirit of Understanding to enlighten my mind with the light of Thy divine truth; the Spirit of Counsel that I may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining Heaven; the Spirit of Fortitude that I may bear my cross with Thee, and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation; the Spirit of Knowledge that I may know God and know myself and grow perfect in the science of the Saints; the Spirit of Piety that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable; the Spirit of Fear that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God, and may dread in any way to displease Him. Amen.

Prayers to the Holy Spirit from the Eastern-Orthodox Tradition



O Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things and Giver of life, come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord.

O resplendent spring of Love which saves, Spirit, giver of life! In the breath of Thy coming embrace mankind which has become

like ice from its iniquities. By the power of Thine unfathomable ways, hasten the downfall of evil and the eternal triumph of the truth of God. May God be all in all, and every creature in heaven, on the earth and under the earth, proclaim: Halleluia, halleluia, halleluia!

Holy Spirit Who coverest the universe and givest life to the world, Thou dost depart from wicked persons. I therefore beseech Thee with humility, not to offend Thee by the impurity of my soul; come and live in me and purify me from all filth of sin: Vouchsafe that with Thine aid I may pass the remainder of my life in righteousness and in repentance, in order to glorify Thee together with the Father and the Son in the ages of ages. Amen.

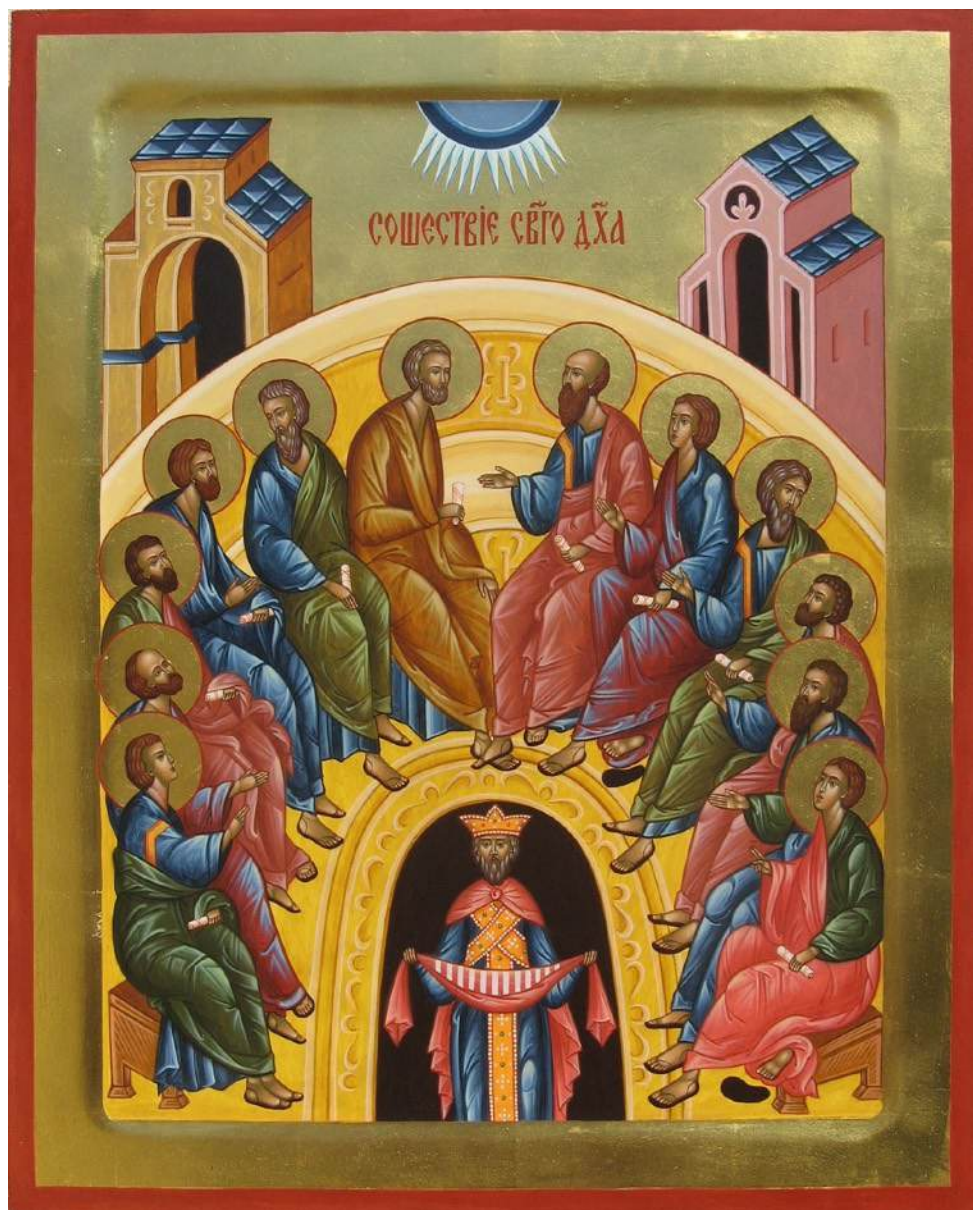
Holy Spirit, I invite you to dwell within me, filling me with your light and wisdom. Pour out your love upon me, soothing my troubled mind and comforting my weary soul. Help me to trust in your divine plan, knowing that you are always with me, guiding me along the path of righteousness.

Truly, let the Holy Spirit come upon us and cleanse us. May He make us receptive of noble thoughts worthy of God. Such thoughts are taught to us by the Lord's Prayer coming from the voice of the Saviour, to whom belongs the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who is ever with us, come and dwell in our hearts. Fill us with the light of your wisdom and the fire of your love.

The Icon of Pentecost and its interpretation

(from the icon reader website)



The Icon for the feast of Pentecost is also called the Descent of the Holy Spirit, as it is a depiction of the event described in the Book of Acts (2,1-4) when the Holy Spirit descended as tongues of fire upon the Apostles gathered together and enabled them to preach in different languages. However, the Feast of Pentecost is not only the commemoration of an historical event, but a celebration of a present reality: the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Likewise, the Icon for Pentecost is much more than the depiction of a past event.

The presence of the Apostle Paul in the icon, even though at that time he had not yet converted on the road to Damascus, hints that this icon is more than a purely historical picture. Sometimes, the evangelists Luke and Mark are also shown, despite also not having been present in the upper chamber at Pentecost. The gathering, then, is a representation of the Church.

The Apostles are seated in a semi-circle, representing a unity and harmony similar to that found in Icons of the Holy Trinity. As in icons of the Holy Trinity, a semi-circle, rather than a full circle, is used so that we as observers are drawn into the unity.

The source of their unity is in another semi-circle at the top of the icon, showing the descent of the Holy Spirit. From the blue semi-circle (c.a. mandorlas) a single ray of light for each of those gathered shines down to illumine them. Sometimes the “tongues of fire” described in Acts are shown at the tips of the rays, ready to descend upon the Apostles. Other times, the tongues of fire are shown already within the halos of each of the seated Saints.

Some icons of Pentecost show a dove, either within the mandorla at the top of the icon, or even descending upon those gathered in the upper chamber. Given the appearance of the Holy Spirit as a dove during Christ’s Baptism, it is understandable that this physical image of the Spirit is also used in Pentecost icons. However, the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of flame at Pentecost, and a dove at Christ’s Baptism. Of course, in reality the Holy Spirit is neither of these things. The form of dove or the form of flames was only a temporary manifestation of his. Therefore, it is inappropriate to depict the Holy Spirit as a dove at Pentecost. In Eastern-Orthodox tradition, it would be indeed inappropriate to depict the Holy Spirit as dove in *any* icon except those for the Theophany feast.

At the bottom of the Icon is another semi-circle, showing an old king against a dark background. He is often named as Kosmos and represents the world. He is crowned as a symbol of earthly authority – i.e. he represents all the peoples of the world, rather than the whole of creation. He is sat “*in*

darkness and the shadow of death” (Luke 1,79) and is aged to show the corruptibility of the world.

Yet he also holds a blanket containing scrolls representing Apostolic teaching. Though in darkness, the descent of the Holy Spirit has not only reached the Apostles, but also all corners of the world into which the Apostles will preach the Gospel.

The Empty Seat — A striking aspect of the Pentecost Icon is the empty space at the centre, between the Apostles Peter and Paul. This central seat is a place of honour, the “*Teacher’s Seat*” around which the Apostles are gathered.

Why is it empty? Because it is the seat Christ should be sitting in, who has ascended physically into Heaven. Yet Jesus promised many times that though He would leave them physically, He would instead give to them the Holy Spirit as a comforter, advocate, and guide. This promise was first realized at Pentecost and is still true today. Therefore, the Icon, which is also an Icon of the Church, shows the Apostles gathered in unity, sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit, surrounding Christ who is invisibly present. The world, Cosmos, is at their feet, ready and waiting to be harvested through the passing on of Christ’s teaching.



Some icons of Pentecost show Mary, the Mother of God, in the centre, occupying the “*Teacher’s Seat*”. Mary was present at Pentecost, though as already mentioned, the icon is not primarily a historical snapshot of the event. The Theotokos’ presence in the centre is not problematic though, as she is the ultimate exemplar of a Christian. With Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, the Holy Spirit acts within people, and through the Saints Christ is manifested in the world. Mary is therefore shown in the “*teacher’s seat*” as the best example we have, and the person on earth who most resembled Jesus Christ (both physically, as His

mother, and spiritually, as His disciple).

The dominating colours are those of red and gold, colours of Pentecost, colours of flames, love, life, glory and majesty.

Ascension

Irene Leader writes:

*"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,
for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will
find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy
and My burden is light."*

MATTHEW
11:29-30



I was contemplating the Ascension this morning and I had this revelation: I saw a large Jesus with a large wooden yoke around His neck with the other space empty. I saw lower down, a small me with a smaller wooden yoke around my neck with the other space empty. I was waiting for God to fill it and share my load. But suddenly I realised if I let go of/took off my yoke and moved up and joined Jesus and took the other half of His yoke - that would be easy, and I wouldn't have one to carry, waiting for Him to fill it. This is so simple, so obvious!

Matthew 11,28: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

A wooden yoke is used around the neck of two oxen for the purpose of ploughing. The yoke keeps them both together. That way, not only if one was younger and less experienced it could learn from the other more experienced, but it keeps them in harmony with each other's step. Then there will be no rubbing, and the yoke is easy to wear.

I knew this scripture. I even understood the meaning, so why had it taken me so long to apply it to my life?

Religion had always taught me to share my burdens with God and 'wait on God' to help me carry my yoke (see: Ps 27,14; 55,22); alternatively, I have been taught, to lay my burdens at the foot of the cross and not to pick them up again. I have always been trying not to pick them up again in my own strength or praying for God to help me not to, but always failed.

I had shared my burdens with God often and was waiting but nothing was changing. Had I not been good enough, done enough, was God not listening? I had prayed hard not to pick them up from the foot of the cross again, but I always did.

I thought - I am supposed to be thinking about the Ascension, so how does this fit in? While Jesus was on earth, He was restricted to how many

people He could interact with. Now, in Heaven, His yoke is available to all until the time He comes again, and we won't need that yoke.

After I had this revelation, things didn't change overnight. The way God created things is that everything has an opposite and equal reaction. The paradox of this is that you can't stop thinking about something without thinking about it first. Every time my burdens came to mind, I immediately used scriptures that affirmed who I was and what resources I had in Christ and pictured myself under His yoke. Therefore, my focus was on Jesus and not my burdens. Before long I was able to just give everything over to Jesus as soon as it came to mind and get on with something else without worrying about it. (High-five, Jesus – I got it!)

Isaiah 55,8-9 says: “*My ways are not your ways.*” There is a gap between heaven and earth which is endless. Verse 10 tells us that as the rain and snow come down from heaven; this leads to joy, peace and praise. There is a need to harmonise to get joy, peace and then be able to praise, and we do this when yoked to Jesus.

“*Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?*” (Amos 3,3). We cannot expect to come under God's yoke, although that is always available to us, unless we change the way we think (if we need to), repent and then harmonise with Him. Sin is failure to achieve God's glory and His standard of excellence (Rom 3,23). When we come into faith, this gives back to God His glory which sin robs from Him. 2 Peter 1,3-11 tells us how to achieve God's standard of excellence. Then we will be yoked to Him continually and not come out from under it. Thank you, Lord! This, of course, is not saying that we have to be sin-free first, because that would be impossible.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the graves bestowing life.

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast made fisherman all-wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them, drawing all the world into Thy net. O Loving One, glory be to Thee. (*Apolytikion*)

Thou hast ascended in glory O Christ our God, granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that Thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world! (*Troparion*)

When Thou didst fulfil the dispensation for our sake, and didst unite earth to heaven, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love Thee, but remaining with them and crying: I am with you and no one will be against you! (*Kontakion*)

Feast of the month: Finding of the Holy Cross

3 May

In the mid-15th century, the Italian painter Piero della Francesca (1416-92) did a remarkable series of frescoes in the choir of the Basilica of St. Francis in Arezzo, known as *The History of the True Cross*. Although a few sections of the paintings are completely lost, most of it is in very good condition. Arezzo is a lovely city, but it would be worth a visit even if there were nothing else to see there besides these works.

The cycle includes some of the popular stories collectively known as the Legend of the Cross, as recounted by Bl. Jacopo de Voragine's. It has to be said that some of these stories stretch the bounds of credibility well past the breaking point, a fact of which Bl. Jacopo was quite aware.



The first panel (above) depicts the death of Adam, the elderly man lying on the ground on the right, with Eve supporting him from behind. His son Seth receives from the Archangel Michael a branch from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Paradise, which he plants in his dead father's mouth (at the bottom, to the left of the tree.) From this branch grows the tree which will become the wood of the Cross. (The depiction of a skull at the base of Christ's Cross derives from this legend.)

Second panel (next page): The tree lives until the time of Solomon, when it is cut down and part of it used to make a bridge. When the Queen of Sheba comes to visit Solomon, she recognizes it as coming from the Tree of Life and kneels before it. On the right, she meets Solomon and his court, and bows before him. One version of the story adds that she had webbed feet, which were made normal by touching the wood. (Piero della Francesca's habit



of depicting people in unusual hats, which he shares with a number of his Tuscan contemporaries, comes from seeing the delegates of the Eastern churches to the Council of Florence, which concluded shortly before he began this project.)



Third panel (left): Solomon has the wood from the bridge buried. (Piero does not depict the story of how the wood was then recovered and used to make the Cross of Christ.)

Fourth panel (right): the story moves forward to Constantine; an angel appears to him in a dream as he sleeps in his tent, the night before the great battle which will make him master of the Roman Empire, leading to his conversion. The angel bears a small



Cross in his hand, a very subtle depiction of the *In hoc signo vinces* episode. (Piero has here done a very skilful depiction of a night scene, which most artists of the Renaissance shy away from.)



Fifth panel (left): Constantine defeats Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. Sadly this is the most damaged of the frescoes.

After the death of



Christ, the wood of His Cross is buried again. According to the legend, when St. Helena went to find it, some of the Jewish leaders knew where it was, but refused to tell her, so she threatened to have them burned alive. They therefore handed over to her one of their number, a man named Judas, whom she had lowered into a well and left for several days, until he agreed to reveal its location. *The sixth panel (left)* shows him being lifted out of the well.

This rather distasteful episode furnished the antiphons for Lauds, Vespers and the minor Hours of the Finding of the Cross in the pre-Tridentine Roman Breviary; the second, for example, reads “*Then she ordered them all to be burned, but they, being fearful, handed over Judas, alleluia.*” These were removed in Clement VIII’s revision of the Tridentine Breviary, and replaced with the antiphons of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.



Seventh panel: St. Helena finds the crosses of both Christ and the two thieves by digging up Mount Calvary. The Lord’s is identified by touching all three to a dead man whose funeral procession happens to be passing by; the third one raises the man back to life, at which all present adore the true Cross.



Eighth panel (above): The Cross is stolen from the church of the Holy Sepulchre by the Persians when they take the city of Jerusalem in 614 AD. This spectacularly chaotic battle scene shows the defeat of the Persian Emperor Chosroes at the hand of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, which took place in 627 at Nineveh. Chosroes returns in defeat to his capital, where he is murdered by his elder son and successor Siroes. The latter will sue for peace with Heraclius, who makes the return of the relics of the Cross one of the conditions for the treaty.



Ninth panel (left): Heraclius, simply dressed and barefooted, brings the relics of the Cross back into Jerusalem. On approaching the city, Heraclius found himself unable to pass the gate, held back by a mysterious force. The bishop of Jerusalem then told him to imitate the poverty and humility of the King of kings by laying aside his royal robes, at which he was able to continue his way to the Holy Sepulchre. The Franciscans who run this church particularly loved this scene and so this fresco is at the top as the most “exalted” of the scenes. (Also, Piero *really* goes to town with the funny hats here!)

Know the Bible! - The Book of Samuel (2)

As mentioned in the previous article of this series (in the March magazine), 1 and 2 Samuel tell one, coherent story and they are divided into two separate books only in our modern bibles. The historic reason of this division is rather simple: for practical considerations, scrolls could not be of any lengths and so the long story the Book of Samuel tells us had to be recorded on two separate scrolls in antiquity.

The second book of Samuel picks up after Saul's death, and David surprises everyone by composing a long poem lamenting the death of the man who tried to murder him. Once again, the author shows David's humility and compassion. He is a man who grieves the death of even his enemies.

David goes on to experience a season of success and divine blessing. The Israelite tribes all come to David and ask him to unify the tribes as their king. He accepts, and the first thing he does as king is go to Jerusalem, conquer it, establish it as Israel's capital city, and rename it Zion. From there, David continues to win many battles and expand Israel's territory.

After David had made Jerusalem the political capital of Israel, he also wanted to make it their religious capital, so he had the ark of the covenant moved into the city (chapter 6). David then tells God that if Israel now has a permanent home, God's presence should also have a place to inhabit, so he asks if he can build a new temple for him. However, God says to David: Thanks for the thought, I really appreciate it, but actually **I** am going to build *you* a house—a dynasty.

Now, this is a key chapter for understanding the storyline of the entire Bible. God makes a promise to David that, from his royal line, there will come a future king who will build God's temple on Earth and set up an eternal kingdom. It is this messianic promise to David that gets developed more in the book of Psalms (especially Psalms 2, 72, 132 and 145) and in the Prophets (see Isaiah 11, Ezekiel 34 and the Book of Zechariah). It is this king that is connected to God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12. The future messianic Kingdom will be how God brings blessing to all nations.

This is a high point for David. And, sadly, it's right here in the midst of God's blessing that things go terribly wrong. David makes a fatal mistake—not fatal for him, that is, but for a man named Uriah, one of David's prized soldiers. From his rooftop, David sees Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, bathing. David finds her, sleeps with her, and gets her pregnant. Then, he tries to cover it all up by having Uriah assassinated and marrying her as soon as she's widowed.

When David is confronted by the prophet Nathan, he immediately owns up to what he's done. He's broken and repents, asking God to forgive

him. And God does forgive, but he doesn't erase the consequences of David's decisions. As a result of his horrible choices, David's family starts to fall apart, making this section a tragic story much like Saul's.

David's sons end up reliving their father's mistakes, but in even worse ways. Amnon sexually abuses his sister Tamar, and when their brother Absalom finds out, he has Amnon assassinated (chapter 13). Absalom then hatches a plot to oust his own father from power, and he launches a full-scale rebellion (chapter 15).

So, for a second time, David is forced to run from his own home and hide in the wilderness, except this time he's not innocent. The rebellion ends when David's son is murdered (chapter 18), and this breaks David's heart. Once again, he laments over those who tried to kill him. David's last days find him back on his throne but as a broken man, wounded by the sad consequences of his sin.

The books of Samuel conclude in chapters 21-24 with a well-crafted epilogue. The stories are out of chronological order because they've been given a symmetrical literary design. The outer pair of stories in chapters 21 (first half) and 24 come from earlier in David's reign and compare the failures of Saul and David, as well as how they hurt others through their bad decisions.

The next pair of stories chapters 21 (second half) and 23 (second half) are about David and his band of "mighty men" fighting the Philistines. What's interesting is that both sections have a story of David's weakness in battle. In contrast to the stories of the heroic, victorious David, here we see a vulnerable David who is dependent on others for help.

The centre of the epilogue has two poems that act like memoirs as David reflects on his life. These are in chapters 22 and 23 (first half). He remembers times when God graciously rescued him from danger and sees this as an expression of God's covenant promise, not just to him but to all the world. Both poems reflect back on the hope for the future messiah who will build an eternal Kingdom.

David's concluding poems also connect back to Hannah's song that opened the book of 1 Samuel. These poems, at the beginning and end and in 2 Samuel 7 in the centre of the book, bring together all the key themes and ideas. Despite Saul and David's evil, God has been at work carrying out his purposes. God opposed their arrogance time after time, and when David humbled himself, he was exalted. By the book's conclusion, the future hope of the final poems reaches far beyond David himself, looking to the future messiah who will bring God's Kingdom and blessing to all nations.

The Psalms

Psalms 48: The city of God

Psalm 48 is a hymn to the glory of God, especially as he manifests it through his holy city. It is possible that this psalm was recited during liturgical processions in the Temple of Jerusalem. While the main theme of the psalm seems Jerusalem, as holy city, the real focus is on the One *because of* whom Jerusalem is holy: God himself.

Some biblical scholars argue that the historic context of the psalm is the deliverance from the Assyrian armies in 701 BC and so it is a prayer of thanksgiving, this is difficult to prove and the psalm itself contains no explicit reference to any historic event.

Verses 1-3 — The opening verses give us right away a festive and majestic tone which will characterise the rest of the psalm as well. The joy Israel experiences is that of God's presence and the time they can spend in his house. To some extent this joy is channelled to the people through the aesthetic beauty of the Temple; beauty that ultimately reflects, however poorly, the beauty of God.

David took the idea of pagan populations which often placed their gods on the top of mountains and linked to some form of paradise, and in his psalm witnessed to the fact that it is the God of Israel who is the "great king", Lord of the world and "paradise", with all its meaning, can only be reached in his presence. We know how, following this idea, the Temple of Jerusalem David's son, Solomon, will build will be decorated by golden and silver palms and flowers.

Verses 4-7 — The next scene, which is laid in Jerusalem, and in which foreign kings plotting against Jerusalem gather and are stricken by God's majesty into submission, cannot be taken as a historic account in the modern sense. However, it certainly does have its origin in the saving deeds of God throughout Israel's history which the chosen people experienced so many times.

The worshipping community, even if at that particular moment of history is surrounded by enemies, can be sure about God's protection and delivery because of the past. Though those mighty acts happened in the distant past, through their liturgical celebration in the Temple-cult the chosen people of God experience them anew. This why they can say: "*As we have heard, so we have seen it.*"

Verses 8-11 — The same manifestation of God's majesty that brings paralysing terror to his enemies, becomes the symbol of his protection and salvation for his own people. And so, full of joy, they rejoicingly bear witness to God's saving judgement as to something they themselves experienced many times over time, and now again in their cultic celebration and worship.

By doing so, Israel herself contributes to God's glory, which extends as far as the revelation of his Name. To his power and majesty neither spatial nor temporal limits are set. Here we touch the very essence of the Old Testament. God's judgement and salvation are not about Israel's safety or power. They are simply the revelation and manifestation of God's true nature.

Verses 12-14 — However, it is important to note how Psalm 48 steps over a limit which Israel sometimes struggled to cross. God's true nature that manifests itself in just judgment and saving acts is not limited to the Temple or to Israel only. It is true that the chosen people are the first recipients and chief bearers of salvation, but they received it as messengers, called to bring it to all nations.

This call is the very explanation of the procession(s) linked to this psalm. We must imagine an endless number of Jewish pilgrims arriving from every corner of the then known world to Jerusalem. As they process around the Temple, singing God's praises and looking down on the holy city, this majestic procession around the impressive buildings of the Temple is supposed to impress an image of all this upon their memory as deeply as possible — so that when they return to their home countries, they can bear witness to all they had experienced. All those who, due to their young age, cannot visit Jerusalem (yet), will only hear about God's majesty as manifested in the holy city from these pilgrims.

Indeed, in Psalm 48 what is at stake is the concern that the knowledge of the revelation of God's greatness and majesty be passed on from generation to generation in an unbroken tradition. Only in this way generations that live perhaps even centuries after certain saving acts of God can truly say: *"As we have heard, so we have seen it."* In this way that deep bond between God and his people, so characteristic of the Old Testament faith, is maintained "for ever", from one generation to another as the constant source of fresh, renewed hope. A hope that shall not be shaken even by the vision of death: *"He will be our guide beyond death."*

This last verse may not have always been part of the original text. Even if that be the case, it fits in with the rest of the psalm without any difficulty and provide a significant, meaningful conclusion to it: the biblical hope of eternal life flows from the reality of God which knows no limits.

Symbols of Early Christian Art: the Crucifix

Based on prof. László Vanyó book

When after my ordination I was sent to Rome for postgraduate studies, my area of specialisation was Early Christianity: the theology, history, philosophy, art and cultural context of the first four centuries. I thought I would start a new series on Early Christian Art (focusing mainly on their symbols) using the book of professor László Vanyó. The first symbol I am inviting you to look into is the crucifix.

Firstly, it is good to quickly remind ourselves what we mean by the word “crucifix”. It is the representation (painting, sculpture) not of the cross alone, neither of the act of crucifixion, but of the Cross *with* the crucified Lord on it.

I hope the Lenten group made us all see the horror of the cross more clearly. We are used to see the crucified Lord. We have made it into a lovely piece of art, a jewellery to wear around our neck, something to decorate our homes with. We are extremely lucky for never having seen a crucifixion in real life. Most Christians of the first centuries were not that lucky and witnessed this horrendous form of execution more than once in their lives.

Crucifixion was not only an atrociously painful death but also a humiliating one. Often the bodies of the executed persons were left on the cross to be devoured by birds and wild animals. Christ was a rare exemption because of the Jewish law which did not allow for bodies to remain on a cross for the day of Sabbath—a law which the Romans accepted.

This explains why, with the only exception of a few gems (small and “hidden”) from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, we do not have early depictions of Christ crucified or of the process of crucifixion. Early Christians did not want to risk Jesus being laughed at and scorned by pagans. That they were right, is demonstrated by what is the earliest surviving depiction of Jesus’ crucifixion... a graffito mocking both Christ and those who believe in him.

This depiction, made in very bad taste, was found in Rome, scratched in plaster on the wall of a room near the Palatine Hill. This *graffito* is difficult to date, but has been estimated to have been made about the year 200. It is called ‘Alexamenos graffito’ or ‘Blasphemous graffito.’ The image shows a young man worshipping a crucified, donkey-headed figure. The Greek inscription (Greek was more commonly spoken in Rome than Latin, especially in lower social classes) approximately translates to “*Alexamenos worships [his] god,*” indicating that the graffito was apparently meant to mock a Christian named Alexamenos.

(A small addition to the story is that in an adjacent room another inscription in a different hand, and this time in Latin, reads “Alexamenos is faithful.” This may be a retort by an unknown party to the mockery of Alexamenos represented in the graffito.)

It was commonly believed that Christians worshipped a god in the form of a donkey—an accusation originally made against the Jews by Apion. We must remember that at the beginning, Christians were seen as a Jewish sect. Origen (185-253), a great theologian and biblical scholar, still, in his time, had to defend Christians against the claims of *onolatry* (donkey-worship).

Once again, in this historic and cultural context, we understand why we have to wait centuries before the image of Christ crucified spreads in the Church.



The beautiful ‘Brescia Casket,’ a carved ivory box from the late 4th century, has scenes of Christ’s Passion (Gethsemane, arrest, Peter’s denial, Pilate, Annas and Caiphas, the Resurrection) but it skips the crucifixion! We will have to wait for another ivory box (*see image*; its four panels are now kept in the British Museum) made in Rome a few decades later, around 400, to see the first proper scene of crucifixion.

This is among the earliest truly narrative images of the Crucifixion, presenting in just four inches of width a wealth of visual details drawn from the gospel accounts: Judas hanging above his money bag, John and Mary, the man berating Jesus, the “King of the Jews” plaque, and Jesus himself, nearly naked and with nails in his palms. The image does provide a few theological nudges – the ironically paired “trees” (Judas-Cross), the bird feeding its young (pelican-Christ), and perhaps Jesus’ erect stance with arms straight out as if he were welcoming the viewer and his open eyes showing his divinity – but these are clearly subordinate to its function as a visual companion to the gospel narratives. Jesus’ body shows no pain or suffering, there are no signs of weakness in him. God doesn’t not suffer, God doesn’t die. While a tree brought about Judas’ punishment, another tree brought about exaltation for Christ.

Once Emperor Constantin abolished crucifixion in the Roman Empire in 337 out of veneration for Christ, and over the following decades old artistic habits died out, representations of the crucifixion and of Jesus crucified started to spread in the Church and in Europe—truly only from the 5th-6th century, and, for the time being, mainly in liturgical context.

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The Vicar's day-off is Tuesday. With enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings, Banns, or Funerals, please, contact the Vicar. If you are in hospital, live in a care home, or are house-bound and you wish to receive Holy Communion and/or Anointing, or to make your Confession, please let the Vicar know and he will be very happy to visit you.

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