

# HIGH TIDE

*Parish  
Magazine*

*Weymouth  
St Paul  
with Fleet*

JUL 2024



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*A brief exploration of the biblical and theological richness of one of the most beautiful prayers in the Book of Common Prayer. "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord..." Did you know this prayer is now officially part of the Roman Liturgy as well?*

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*English weather yet again has been "caught red-handed": after a few days of heatwaves, we, again, are having some cold days. Not cold enough to "freeze the balls off a brass monkey" but cold enough to make us wonder - will we have a proper summer or should we just "bite the bullet?" Welcome to "dear old Blighty!" In this article, Jeanne offers us a collection of sayings and explores their origins.*

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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!*

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*We continue to explore the immense spiritual treasury of the Church of England. The article concludes with a beautiful prayer for Ascension-tide from the Mozarabic Liturgy, a liturgical tradition that inspired so much Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.*

Two (well... three) quick, simple and delicious pasta recipes **30**

*For days when it is too hot to turn on the oven; or for days when we do not have much time or energy for elaborate cooking, these pasta recipes are easy, quick, inexpensive but delicious options to try. They can be easily modified to suit personal preferences. All you need is some pasta, tuna, olives, and lemon... and a few herbs.*

*Because of their unique character, Hebrew letters have been objects of study and mystical interpretation for centuries. For example, the letter “vav” looks like a nail — it means “hook, tent peg, spear” and is used as “and” in Hebrew. Just as a hook or nail connects two things in life, so does “and” in grammar... Based on this ancient and venerable tradition, Irene Leader explores the “mystical meaning” of some Fathers’ Day related Hebrew words.*

Saint of the month: St. Martha of Bethany

*Though mentioned only a few times in the Bible, we can discover a lot about St. Martha's personality and faith from these verses. She must have been a great cook and a very generous woman. She also appears to be the head of her rather unusual family. But the reason why the Church declared her a saint is her faith.*

Know the Bible

*A new series where we will look at every book of the Bible to explore its contents. This month we examine the very first book of the Holy Scripture: the Book of Genesis. Did you know there are giants in it...?!*

Hailes Abbey, now in ruins, was once home to Christ's Blood

*Cared for by English Heritage, these picturesque ruins are a wonderful destination for a weekend trip in Gloucestershire.*

Chocolate: the gift of heaven or the deceit of the evil...?

*The fascinating history of the encounter between chocolate and the Church: can Christians drink this Aztec ritual drink? Is it a beverage or food - does it break fast? Can you drink it in church during services?*

The Psalms: Psalm 39

*As the psalmist (King David) recognises the futility and weakness of human nature, he comes to see God as his only hope and help. Amidst so much suffering, he finally is able to open his heart to God and wait for his help patiently and trustingly.*

*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 28<sup>th</sup> July**. Please, send all articles, information, news you wish to be publish by Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July.*

Front cover: “Visitation” (detail of linen/wool altar frontal)  
Unknown (ca. 1410); Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt (Germany)

## From the Vicar

Dearly Beloved,

July starts with a lovely feast of Our Lady: the Feast of the Visitation. Witnessed by the Bible and commemorated as the second joyful mystery of the Holy Rosary, the feast itself started to be celebrated only around the 13<sup>th</sup> century under the influence of Franciscan friars. In Hungary, Mary bears the title of “Our Blessed Lady of sickle” as the feast traditionally indicated the beginning of reaping and harvest. In every village, men and women would go to church for Mass and then, in their Sunday best, would reap some grain only to spend the rest of the day in celebration. Only the day after the real, the hard work began.

During the reform of the liturgy the feast was moved from 2 July to 31 May for people erroneously believed that the Visitation commemorated and celebrated Mary’s visit to Elizabeth. And since the birthday of Elizabeth’s son, St. John the Baptist, is 24 June, Mary’s visitation had to happen before that day. Otherwise, how would the words of Elizabeth in the Bible be true: “*Behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy*” (Luke 1,44)?

However, the content of the feast is not Mary’s visit to Elizabeth, or their meeting - both lasting only for a moment - but rather the 14 weeks Mary spent with Elizabeth, helping her elder cousin selflessly while herself being pregnant and “dealing” with the fact of having just become the Mother of the Saviour, the Mother of God.

According to tradition, Mary received the visit from the Archangel Gabriel on 25 March and, having learnt about Elizabeth’s pregnancy, she left to help her elderly cousin. St. John the Baptist was born on 24 June and circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day: 1 June. Zachariah, John’s father, regained his speech immediately. Now that they were safe - Elizabeth survived the birth, John has been circumcised, Zachariah resumed his role as head of the family and priest - Mary could leave them. And so she did the day after John’s circumcision, on 2 July.

So, surprising as it might be, the Visitation commemorates and celebrates Mary’s departure from and not her arrival to Elizabeth. Indeed, another folkloristic tradition in Hungary used to be the preparation of Mary’s chair. People, especially in villages, put the most comfortable chair they had at home in front of their houses and decorated it with flowers and fruits so that should the expecting Mary pass by on her way home from Elizabeth, she can rest and be refreshed on her journey.

Mary knew that what Elizabeth and Zachariah wanted the most in this life was a child. So, naturally, she must have been so very happy for them when she found out the good news from the Archangel Gabriel. But temporary enthusiasm over good news is so easy! As are resolutions springing from it. What is much less easy, are perseverance and faithfulness.

How very often we ourselves are moved by various events, be they good or evil. Countless were the tearful eyes at the outbreak of war in Ukraine and unstoppable did seem the flow of monetary and other help. Tears seems to have dried up since together with the willingness to help the suffering.

A well-said prayer, a moving word from the Scripture, a moment of grace or joy or love can fill us with resolutions, great plans, and energy. We volunteer to help out in the parish, we decide to pray more frequently, we resolve to be more charitable and patient... Then come the dull, ordinary days and weeks and months often combined with other people's ungratefulness or criticism and our enthusiasm, good will, and resolution turn into dust and ashes. Often a bad word from others, a cloudy day, or boredom are enough for us to give up in what otherwise we know to be good.

Our Lady's greatness was not in her sudden joy over Elizabeth's pregnancy or in her in-the-moment-decision of visiting her. Mary's virtues show most clearly in the hidden, tiring, and monotonous 14 weeks she spent with Elizabeth and Zechariah, away from her home, from Joseph, from her friends, from the place of the Annunciation, faithfully attending to the sometimes boring, other times physically demanding chores around Elizabeth and her household.

Sharing in the joys and sorrows of others in the moment's heat is only human - this is how we are made. Football hooligans can do that. Willing to continue to share their joys or sorrows, putting ourselves, our own joys and sorrows in second place, persevering in what we recognise as good and true, is what we call Christian virtues.

Let us then learn from Our Blessed Lady. Let our lives be like Mary's chair - let us put what is the best in our life to the service of others, decorating it with flowers of humble service and with the fruits of faithful perseverance. It is only when we finally recognise that whatever we do - be it for the parish, for the church, for others - we do it for God himself that we will be able to remain faithful and joyful in our service. As Mary was. Until then criticism or a bad word from others, the boredom of daily life, or simply our own weakness will so easily hurt us, break us, or make us will to give up.

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

*Fr. Gregory* 5

## Various prayers

*Fr. James writes:*

***Prayer for the grace of being able and willing to forgive*** — Lord Christ, as your executors nailed you to the hard wood of the cross, you prayed, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” And in your holy gospel, O Christ, you admonish us to pray for those who have wounded and offended us. Yet, this call to forgive those who have hurt us, either intentionally or unintentionally, is indeed difficult. We cannot do this either in our own strength or love. Grant us the grace and compassion to extend forgiveness to those who have offended or harmed us (*especially, here you may wish to add specific persons*). May your mercy to help us to forgive others become a wellspring of healing and reconciliation with the other person(s), even if they are never aware of the hurt that they have inflicted upon us. And as we forgive others, may you forgive us the wrong that we may have committed toward them. Deal with them and with us, not as we deserve, but in your infinite love to forgive and restore us to yourself and to one another. May this act of forgiveness and reconciliation help to break the chain of violence and destruction and bring forth a harvest of peace. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

***Prayers for those who struggle with faith/God*** — Let nothing ever disturb you, nothing affright you. All things are passing, God never changes. Patient endurance attains to all things; who God possesses in nothing is wanting: alone God suffices. (*St. Teresa of Avila*)

***The Dark Night of the Soul*** — The night is not dark to you, O God. Yet this dark night of my soul that has taken hold of me seems very dark indeed. Your presence seems so far removed right now. And, yet, the faint hope of faith still lingers somewhere in the dark recesses of my soul. Come quickly and shed forth your radiant light and penetrate my darkness. Illumine my darken path so that I may find my way back to you. Through Jesus Christ, the true Light of the world. Amen.

Steer the ship of my life, good Lord, to your quiet harbour, where I can be safe from the storms of sin and conflict. Show me the course I should take. Renew in me the gift of discernment, so that I can always see the right direction in which I should go. And give me the strength and the courage to choose the right course, even when the sea is rough and the waves are high, knowing that through enduring hardship and danger in your name we shall find courage and peace. Amen. (*St. Basil the Great*)

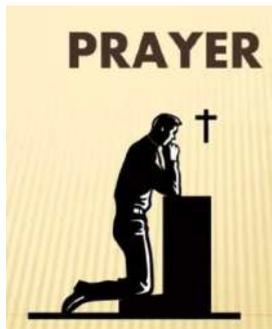
There are days when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and weigh us down. When the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening. When our lives have no music in them, and our hearts are lonely, and our souls have lost their courage. Flood the path with light, turn our eyes to where the skies are full of promise. Tune our hearts to brave music. Give us the sense of comradeship with heroes and saints of every age and so quicken our spirits that we may be able to encourage the souls of all who journey with us on the road of life, to your honour and glory. Amen. (*St. Augustine of Hippo*)

O God, who formed me in my mother's womb and before whom no thoughts are hid and all secrets are known, you know my inner most doubts and uncertainties. I want to believe and trust you. But I am unsure and afraid. Come swiftly to dispel my doubts and fears. Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.

Like a lost sheep, Lord, you know how easily I stray from the path of life that you set before me. Be my good shepherd and seek me out and lead me back to your waters of rest so that I may once again feast in your presence and delight you as the only true source of life and happiness. In the name of Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd of our souls. Amen.

The fires of my faith, O Lord, that once burned strong are now simply smouldering ambers. Send forth the blazing fires of your Holy Spirit to blow through the chambers of my soul. Enflame afresh the fires of faith so that you might raise me once again and fill me with your Spirit so that my life may glorify you. In the Name of the One, Jesus Christ, who promised to baptize us with heavenly fire. Amen.

**For Guidance** — O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldst have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



**Prayer of self-giving and openness** — Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will. All I own and all I have, You gave to me, to you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours, dispose of it according to your will. Give me your love and grace, this is enough for me. (*St. Ignatius of Loyola*)

## What is the Eucharist?



Because of the Feast of Corpus Christi (from Latin, literally meaning “*The Body of Christ*”), we had various processions at St. Paul’s with... Indeed, with what? Could we name and explain to an “outsider” the thing (and, most importantly, *The Thing*) carried by the priest in procession?

First things first, let’s go straightaway to *What* is important and *what* is not. What is not important is the big, nice, shiny, golden thing (sometimes decorated with a wreath of flowers) held by the priest, with a veil, in front of his face as he proceeds around, followed by the Congregation singing hymns. It is called *monstrance* or, less frequently, *ostensorium*. Both names come from the Latin verb “to show” (*monstrare* or *ostendere*) and, as the name suggests, it serves to hold and to show the important “*Thing*.”

And the important “*Thing*” is nothing else but the Eucharist.

One of the seven Sacraments instituted by the Lord Jesus, the Eucharist is at the very heart of our Christian life because of its immense richness. The various names given to this Sacrament are a hint of this richness: *Eucharist, Holy Communion, Mass, Blessed Sacrament, The Lord’s Supper, the Breaking of the Bread, Memorial of Christ’s Passion, Divine Liturgy, the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, Host, August Sacrifice*. All these names refer to the same Sacrament though each one of them stresses a different aspect of It.

To an external observer the Eucharist seems to be nothing more than some bread and/or wine. However, Christ teaches us that they are His Body and Blood. Before we explore a bit what the Eucharist is, perhaps it will be useful to clarify some basics.

*Origins* - the Lord Jesus took bread and wine the day before he was crucified, at the Last Supper, and said “*This is my body*” and “*This is the cup of my blood*” and he added: “*Do this in remembrance of me.*” Because it is the Lord Jesus, we happily believe him and obey him. We may not know how, but if he says that bread is his body and that wine is his blood, we accept them as such. And as he said to do this in his remembrance, we do it. Daily.

*Bread* — Christ, following Jewish traditions, used unleavened bread at the Last Supper. This is still the case in the Western churches: the host or

wafer we use is unleavened. However, in the East leavened bread is used instead. This has to do with the Greek translation of the Bible.

While it is not important whether the bread (host, wafer) is leavened or unleavened, it **must** be of pure wheat grain, it can only contain flour and water, and it must contain at least some gluten. So, barley bread or gluten-free bread, or anything else cannot be used.

To prevent all the problems crumbs may cause, in the West we normally use a wafer or host rather than “proper” bread.

*Wine* — the Lord Jesus probably used red wine (it was more common in Palestine in his times) and most probably he mixed it with some water. Orthodox churches still use red wine but in the West white wine is more common for practical reasons: they do not stain the white linen cloth used to dry the chalice (the Orthodox, indeed, use a *red* linen cloth instead). Both in the West and in the East, in every church, a small amount of water is mixed with the wine.

The wine, white or red, must be pure, made of grape, and fermented - that is, it must contain some alcohol. Alcohol free wine or fruit wine (other than grape) cannot be used.

*Bread or Wine* — when we talk about the Eucharist, are we referring to the consecrated Bread or to the consecrated Wine? Well, either. Or both. For practical reasons, lay people have more “contact” with the Bread. It would be difficult to carry in procession (consecrated) wine, or to take it to the sick for Holy Communion. The only “strict rule” is that when bread and wine are made into Christ’s Body and Blood, it must be done together but Communion, adoration, Benediction or Processions could be done with either or both.

*How* — how does bread and wine become the Sacrament of the Eucharist? By imitating what Christ did: his very own words are pronounced over the bread and wine (“*This is my body*” and “*This is the cup/chalice of my blood*”). However, these words must be pronounced by the right person, with the right intention.

*The priest* — when the Lord Jesus gave the commandment of doing what he did, he gave that commandment to the only persons present at the Last Supper: the Apostles whom he made (the first) bishops. Bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood, they become a Sacrament, the Eucharist, only if it is a bishop or priest who says the words. This has nothing to do with the (assumed/pretended) holiness of priests. The Lord, in his great goodness, wanted his Church to have this assurance - regardless the merits of the person, we can be sure that Bread and Wine are his Body and Blood every

time a priest pronounces these words during the Mass. A lay person, holy and virtuous as he or she may be, will never be able to do this.

It is important to remember that because the Apostles were all men, the overwhelming majority of Christians believe and agree (Catholics, Orthodox, Anglo-Catholic Anglicans, many Protestants) that only men can be bishops and priests and so if a female bishop or priest presides at the Eucharist, pronouncing the words of Christ, nothing happens - just as nothing would happen in the case those words were pronounced by a lay person. We may not know why but the Lord Jesus chose men as Apostles, bishops, and priests.

Let's see now a few of the names of this Sacrament so we can gain a deeper understanding of such a great mystery!

*The Lord's Supper* — this name, a rather obvious one, indicates both the origin of the Sacrament (Christ was the first one to do it and he did it at the Last Supper) and the link between what we do and what he did. Every time bread and wine are consecrated (=“made”) into the Body and Blood of Christ by a priest, we are taken - in a mystical (spiritual, sacramental) way - back into the Upper Room of the Last Supper, two-thousand year ago.

As Maundy Thursday, the night of the Last Supper, was the opening scene of Christ's Passion and Death, the Eucharist is also called *Memorial of Christ's Passion* or *Memorial of the Lord*.

*Blessed Sacrament* — it is called “sacrament” (=sacred sign) because visible elements (bread and wine) give us invisible realities (the Body and Blood of Christ) just as in the case of all seven Sacraments. Like in Baptism, for example, visible water pour on us invisible grace (forgiveness of sins, divine adoption, etc.).

It is called “blessèd” to mark the great difference between this sacrament and the other six. All sacraments give us grace but only this sacrament gives us God himself.

As mentioned above, we believe what Christ said because of who he is. So, if he said “This is my body/Blood” and that is what we believe. Now, by “body/blood” we do not mean a piece of flesh, or a corpse, or spilt blood. It is like with our bodies: as long as we are alive (and Christ is alive!), where our body is, there we are, too. Our body is inseparable from our soul, mind, personality, etc. So once the priest pronounced the words “This is my body/blood”, that piece of bread/cup of wine becomes Christ's true presence. He starts being there as you do when you enter a room: with his body, blood, breath, mind, soul, thoughts, affection, person... he himself, as he is, the full and true Christ!

*The breaking of the Bread* — this name refers to the Jewish tradition of taking a loaf of unleavened bread and the head of the family breaking it and giving to everyone around the table. It also stresses how the Eucharist makes us all united, makes us all one. Those who receive the same Eucharist, would sin greatly if they willingly broke that unity with others.

*Eucharist* — we read in the Gospels that Christ “gave thanks” to God at the Last Supper, while holding the bread/cup. Again, it was (and still is) a Jewish custom, part of the Pesach-meal. εὐχαριστέω (eucharistéo) in Greek simply means “to thank” and it became one of the names of this sacrament. This name reminds us how we must bring our own thanksgivings to the altar.

*Holy Communion* — not much explanation is needed: we receive the Host and Chalice, making this our own holy communion as a means of participating in this sacrament. However, the other meaning of the word “communion” is important, too. We enter *into* communion with God, with the assembly of Saints, with the whole Church, and with each other through the Eucharist, aptly called the *Sacrament of Unity* as well. To very little would avail this great sacrament for those who do not seek to preserve and to cultivate this unity between members of the One Body.

*Divine Liturgy* — a name more popular in the Eastern Churches, it indicates the fact that whenever we celebrate the Eucharist, we become part of the one, eternal worship conducted in heaven. Christ, in his human nature, as our one and true High Priest, offers the worship of love, praise, thanksgiving, adoration, and propitiation to the Father, interceding, through his own Blood, for his Church and for all mankind. The Angels and Saints join him in this act of perfect worship - and so do we, at the altar.

*(Holy) Mass* — a name used in the Western churches, and it refers to the concluding Latin words “*Ite, missa est*” of the Eucharist: “Go, the mass is ended.” Pope Benedict XVI wrote in 2007: “*In antiquity, missa simply meant ‘dismissal’. In Christian usage, however, it gradually took on a deeper meaning. The word ‘dismissal’ has come to imply a ‘mission’. These few words succinctly express the missionary nature of the Church.*”

These names, and there are more!, indicate the richness of this Sacrament. The Eucharist is Christ’s true presence, his Sacrifice renewed, his Last Supper and Passion made present, a means of unity between heaven and earth, a means of unity between members of the church, the perfect worship offered to God, the deepest communion between God and man, our spiritual nourishment... The Eucharist is all this and still much more. St. Thomas Aquinas applies to the Eucharist the words of Deuteronomy 4,7: “*No other nation has a god who is so near when they need him as the Lord our God is to us.*”

## The Prayer of Humble Access

The Prayer of Humble Access was written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1548 for the Book of Common Prayer. Pope Benedict XVI made it part of the Catholic Missal used by the Ordinariate and so now it is a shared treasure of Anglicans and Catholics.

Unlike much of the newly reformed Church of England's liturgy, Cranmer did not adapt this prayer from any existing sources but he himself wrote it, making this supplication one of the first prayers Anglicanism offered to the world.

While the *wording* of the prayer is Cranmer's work, for its *content* he relied heavily on various sources as we shall see on the next page.

The Prayer of Humble Access has a poetic language, deep theology, and rich spirituality - and it offers a remedy to a grave error of our times. Modern Christianity no longer has room for sin: it is seldom ever preached about, the number of confessions are declining, penance and fasting are not part of the life of many Christians, repentance is an alien idea - yet without a clear awareness of our sinfulness and consequent brokenness, we devalue Christ's sacrifice and fool ourselves into believing in some human self-sufficiency.

Indeed, beautiful as it is, the Prayer of Humble Access is not widely used in churches. By far the most common frustration with it is its seemingly excessive focus on our unworthiness. It is especially striking that the communicants pray this after having confessed their sins and received absolution both in the Anglican and Roman Church. Even after we have our unworthiness absolved, this prayer forces us to remember it! The Prayer of Humble Access seems to its detractors yet another instance of the self-flagellating spirituality that has destroyed many a Christian's self-esteem by telling them they are worms barely tolerated by God rather than beloved bearers of the divine image.

We must affirm, of course, that we are the image of God. This is non-negotiable. But we also must admit that there is a propensity for self-directed behaviours at the centre of the human heart. When left to our own devices, we all do what is easiest and what benefits us directly. This doesn't mean that there is nothing good in us, but it does mean that we are in constant need of God's forgiveness and mercy. We miss the mark often, but the real beauty of our faith is that God is always willing to forgive us and to restore in us whatever our sinfulness destroys or corrupts. The point is not our sinfulness, but his eternal and unmerited mercy and compassion. This is what this prayer reminds us of every time we pray it!

<p><i>We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Lord Jesus Christ, I approach Thy banquet table in fear and trembling, for I am a sinner, and dare not rely on my own worth, but only on Thy goodness and mercy.” (St. Ambrose)</li> <li>• Matthew 8,5-18 (<i>the centurion’s words of his unworthiness</i>)</li> <li>• To presume one’s own salvation is a grave sin: arrogant and haughty. (St. Thomas Aquinas)</li> </ul>
<p><i>We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I know my sins are many and great, and they fill me with fear, but I hope in Thy mercies, for they cannot be numbered.” (St. Ambrose)</li> <li>• Mark 7,24-30 (<i>the Syro-Phoenecian woman who asked only to eat the crumbs that fall from the master’s table</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><i>But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniel 9,18: “For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.”</li> <li>• Divine Liturgy of St. Basil: “Not according to our own righteousness, for we have not done anything good on earth, but by your mercy and your compassions that you have bestowed liberally on us, do we approach with confidence your holy altar.”</li> <li>• Divine Liturgy of St. James: “for our confidence is not in our righteousness but in your good mercy by which you make us your people.”</li> <li>• “the depth of Thy compassion never ends” (St. Ambrose)</li> <li>• Exodus 34,6-7 (<i>God’s character of mercy</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Christ gave himself in the two species so that He might feed the entirety of Man who is composed, doubly, of both body and soul.” (St. Thomas Aquinas)</li> <li>• “Purify me in body and soul, and make me worthy to taste the Holy of Holies.” (St. Ambrose)</li> <li>• John 6,53-56 (<i>those who eat Jesus’ flesh and drink his blood continually dwell in him, and he in them</i>)</li> <li>• 1 Cor 10,14-18 (<i>partaking in the eucharistic Bread and Wine is a partaking in Christ</i>)</li> </ul>

## Everyday sayings and their curious origins

*Jeanne James writes:*

***Bite the bullet*** — to accept something difficult or unpleasant.

*Origin:* In the olden days, when doctors were short on anaesthesia or time during a battle, they would ask the patient to bite down on a bullet to distract from the pain. The first recorded use of the phrase was in 1891 in *The Light that Failed* (a novel by Rudyard Kipling).

***Break the ice*** — To break off a conflict or commence a friendship.

*Origin:* Back when road transportation was not developed, ships would be the only transportation and means of trade. At times, the ships would get stuck during the winter because of ice formation. The receiving country would send small ships to “break the ice” to clear a way for the trade ships. This gesture showed affiliation and understanding between two territories.

***Butter someone up*** — To impress someone with flattery

*Origin:* This was a customary religious act in ancient India. The devout would throw butter balls at the statues of their gods to seek favour and forgiveness.

***Mad as a hatter*** — To be completely crazy

*Origin:* No, you didn’t already know this one, because it didn’t originate from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. Its origins date from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries - well before Lewis Carroll’s book was published. In 17<sup>th</sup> century France, poisoning occurred among hat makers who used mercury for the hat felt. The “Mad Hatter Disease” was marked by shyness, irritability, and tremors that would make the person appear “mad.”

***Cat got your tongue?*** — Asked to a person who is at a loss for words

*Origin:* The English Navy used to use a whip called “Cat-o’-nine-tails” for flogging. The pain was so severe that it caused the victim to stay quiet for a long time. Another possible source could be from ancient Egypt, where liars’ and blasphemers’ tongues were cut out and fed to the cats. (What a treat for the cats!)

***Barking up the wrong tree*** — To have misguided thoughts about an event or situation, a false lead

*Origin:* This refers to hunting dogs that may have chased their prey up a tree. The dogs bark, assuming that the prey is still in the tree, when the prey is no longer there.

***Turn a blind eye*** — To ignore situations, facts, or reality

*Origin:* The British Naval hero, Admiral Horatio Nelson, had one blind eye. Once when the British forces signalled for him to stop attacking a fleet of Danish ships, he held up a telescope to his blind eye and said, “I do not see the signal.” He attacked, nevertheless, and was victorious.

***Bury the hatchet*** — To stop a conflict and make peace

*Origins:* This one dates back to the early times in North America when the Puritans were in conflict with the Native Americans. When negotiating peace, the Native Americans would bury all their hatchets, knives, clubs, and tomahawks. Weapons were literally buried and made inaccessible.

***Caught red-handed*** — To be caught in the act of doing something wrong

*Origin:* This originates from an old English law that ordered any person to be punished for butchering an animal that wasn't his own. The only way the person could be convicted is if he was caught with the animal's blood still on his hands.

***Give a cold shoulder*** — Being unwelcoming or antisocial toward someone

*Origin:* The first recorded use of this phrase dates back to the early 1800s. It refers to an old custom of giving an unwelcome guest a cold piece of meat from the shoulder of mutton, pork, or beef chop, as opposed to a welcome guest receiving a warm serving. This was a polite way to communicate, “You may leave now.”

***Go the whole nine yards*** — To try your best at something

*Origin:* During World War II, the fighter pilots were equipped with nine yards of ammunition. When they ran out, it meant that they had tried their best at fighting off the target with the entirety of their ammunition.

***Rub the wrong way*** — To bother or annoy someone

*Origin:* Early Americans, during the colonial times, would ask their servants to rub their oak floorboards “the right way”. The wrong way (not wiping them with dry fabric after wet fabric) would cause streaks to form and ruin it,

leaving the homeowner annoyed. Alternatively, it could have derived from rubbing a cat's fur the "wrong way," which annoys them.

***Square meal*** — The phrase refers to a hearty, wholesome meal.

*Origin:* This phrase comes from the English Royal Navy during the time of Nelson. In order to stop plates and dishes slipping around on the table while ships were at sea, four pieces of wood were nailed to the benches in the shape of a square – hence the phrase 'square meal'.

***Sincere*** — To be genuine

*Origin:* The word 'sincere' has some interesting roots. One story states that the word originates from the ancient marble quarries of Rome, where unscrupulous stone dealers used to cover imperfections in the marble with wax. The practice eventually became illegal, as the Roman Empire certified that all marble had to be 'sine cera' or 'sincerus', meaning 'without wax'.

***To let your hair down*** — To have fun and enjoy yourself.

*Origin:* In Tudor England, the ladies wore pointed bonnets called wimples. Underneath their hats, their hair was piled high and pinned up. Naturally, in the bed chamber, caps and hats (as well as other garments) were removed. It was a time for wanton behaviour and abandonment – but only in the bedroom, and in private. Hence, letting one's hair down was a practical as well as a symbolic thing.

***Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey*** — This is a very common description of the British winter weather

*Origin:* No, it's not as coarse and rude as it might appear! It actually comes from the times when the Navy fought with cannons. To prevent the cannon balls from rolling around the ship, they were welded to a small stable upright called a brass monkey. In the bitter cold, the weld could snap and let the balls loose!

***Dear old Blighty*** — Blighty is a nickname for Britain.

*Origin:* In the First World War, soldiers would pray for a 'blighty': a wound that would get them back to Britain for treatment. Some people say that the word is a corruption of 'beauty', but it's more likely derived from a Hindu word meaning 'stranger' – and that it was picked up during the times of the British Raj.

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

**Anniversaries of death**

**Order of Morning and Evening Prayer**

## Calendar for July 2023

MON	1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD</b>	9am
TUE	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VISITATION OF OUR LADY	9am
WED	3 <sup>rd</sup>	St. Irenaeus Bishop, Martyr	10am
THU	4 <sup>th</sup>	Bl. John Cornelius, Hugh Green & Comp.	6pm
FRI	5 <sup>th</sup>	St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria	12pm
SAT	6 <sup>th</sup>	St. Maria Goretti, Virgin & Martyr	9.30am
SUN	7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	8 <sup>th</sup>	St. Elizabeth Queen, Widow	9am
TUE	9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>ST. JOHN FISHER, THOMAS MORE</b>	6pm
WED	10 <sup>th</sup>	The Seven Holy Brothers, Martyrs	10am
THU	11 <sup>th</sup>	<i>St. Pius I Pope, Martyr</i>	6pm
FRI	12 <sup>th</sup>	St. John Gualbert Abbot	12pm
SAT	13 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Of Our Lady</i>	9.30am
SUN	14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	15 <sup>th</sup>	St. Henry Emperor	9am
TUE	16 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel</i>	9am
WED	17 <sup>th</sup>	<i>St. Alexis</i>	10am
THU	18 <sup>th</sup>	St. Camillus of Lellis	6pm
FRI	19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St. Vincent de Paul</b>	12pm
SAT	20 <sup>th</sup>	<i>St. Margaret, Virgin &amp; Martyr</i>	9.30am
SUN	21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>8<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>St. Mary Magdalen Penitent</b>	9am
TUE	23 <sup>rd</sup>	St. Apollinaris Bishop, Martyr	9am
WED	24 <sup>th</sup>	<i>St. Christina, Virgin &amp; Martyr</i>	10am
THU	25 <sup>th</sup>	ST. JAMES THE GREATER, AP.	6pm
FRI	26 <sup>th</sup>	ST. ANNE, MOTHER OF OUR LADY*	12pm
SAT	27 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Of Our Lady</i>	9.30am
SUN	28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>9<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	29 <sup>th</sup>	St. Martha, Virgin	9am
TUE	30 <sup>th</sup>	<u><i>Monthly Requiem</i></u>	9am
WED	31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>St. Ignatius of Loyola</b>	10am

\* Mass is followed by anointing

*We pray for...*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Our Benefactors, living & departed
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Expectant mothers - *Doris Kafe*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Good government - *Florence Biddlecombe, Peter Coles*
- 4<sup>th</sup> Priests & vocations - *Mary Bown*
- 5<sup>th</sup> Dying
- 6<sup>th</sup> Shrine of Walsingham
  
- 7<sup>th</sup> Our Parish
- 8<sup>th</sup> Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort
- 9<sup>th</sup> Our Bishops - *Doris Gray*
- 10<sup>th</sup> Beechcroft - *Ted Eyles, Marion Barnett, Jean Robinson, Davi Gill*
- 11<sup>th</sup> People on holiday - *Doug Biddlecombe*
- 12<sup>th</sup> Our friends - *Mildred Griffiths, Sandra Cutler*
- 13<sup>th</sup> Our Cell of OLW
  
- 14<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Bill Collings*
- 15<sup>th</sup> Those in power and with authority - *Penny Daniels*
- 16<sup>th</sup> The lonely - *Les Patridge*
- 17<sup>th</sup> S.P.O.T. - *John Yates*
- 18<sup>th</sup> Care homes & hospitals
- 19<sup>th</sup> Carers - *Elise Savage*
- 20<sup>th</sup> Victims of abuse and violence - *Charles White, Betty Barlow*
  
- 21<sup>st</sup> Our Parish - *Roy Berry*
- 22<sup>nd</sup> The grace of true repentance- *Lilian Freeborn, Gladys Day*
- 23<sup>rd</sup> With eating disorders - *Fred Bray, Isabella Jones*
- 24<sup>th</sup> Our enemies - *Doris Hutchings*
- 25<sup>th</sup> The growth of our Parish - *David Mounce*
- 26<sup>th</sup> Sick - *Marjorie Walmsley*
- 27<sup>th</sup> Our choir and organists - *Peter Biles*
  
- 28<sup>th</sup> Our Parish
- 29<sup>th</sup> Chapter of St. Aldhelm (Servers) - *Kim Uphill*
- 30<sup>th</sup> Departed - *Herbert Heaseman pr.*
- 31<sup>st</sup> Pope Francis - *Peggy Jones, Mabel Pitney, Monty Hussey*

*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

**V.** The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.

**R.** And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

**V.** Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

**R.** Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

**V.** Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

**R.** Be it unto me according to thy word.

**V.** Hail Mary... **R.** Holy Mary...

**V.** And the Word was made flesh.

**R.** And dwelt amongst us.

**V.** Hail Mary... **R.** Holy Mary...

**V.** Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

**R.** That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

**V.** Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same 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.** Christ has redeemed us by his own Blood, O come, let us worship him.

**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.

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. Christ has redeemed us by his own Blood, O come, let us worship him.

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.

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. Christ has redeemed us by his own Blood, O come, let us worship him.

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. Christ has redeemed us by his own Blood, O come, let us worship him.

#### HYMN

Now, from the slumbers of the night arising,  
Chant we the holy psalmody of David,  
Hymns to our Master, with a voice concordant,  
Sweetly intoning.

So may our Monarch pitifully hear us,  
That we may merit with his saints to enter  
Mansions eternal, therewithal possessing  
Joy beatific.

This be our portion, God forever blessed,  
Father eternal, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Whose is the glory, which through all creation  
Ever resoundeth. Amen.

*The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow (please see next page).*

*Each reading ends with these words:*

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

1	Psalms 6	Exodus 12,13-28 Hebrews 9,11-15	17	121	1 Samuel 11 Luke 22,39-46
2	85, 150	1 Samuel 2,1-10 Mark 3,31-end	18	122	1 Samuel 12 Luke 22,47-62
3	79	1 Samuel 1,1-20 Luke 19,28-end	19	123	1 Samuel 13,5-18 Luke 22,63-end
4	87	1 Samuel 2,27-end Luke 20,1-19	20	125	1 Samuel 14,1-18 Luke 23,1-12
5	88	1 Samuel 3 Luke 20,20-26	<b>21</b>	<b>67, 70</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 30,1-10</b> <b>1 Peter 3,8-18</b>
6	90	1 Samuel 4 Luke 20,27-40	22	126	1 Samuel 14,19-end Luke 23,13-25
<b>7</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 24,10-15</b> <b>Acts 28,11-16</b>	23	132	1 Samuel 15,1-23 Luke 23,26-43
8	89 v. 1-18	1 Samuel 5 Luke 20,41-end	24	133	1 Samuel 16 Luke 23,44-56
9	92	1 Samuel 6,1-16 Luke 21,1-19	25	117	2 Kings 1,9-15 Luke 9,46-56
10	95	1 Samuel 7 Luke 21,20-28	26	139	1 Samuel 17,31-54 Luke 24,1-35
11	98	1 Samuel 8 Luke 21,29-end	27	142	1 Samuel 18,1-16 Luke 24,36-end
12	99	1 Samuel 9,1-14 Luke 22,1-13	<b>28</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>1 Maccabees 2,15-22</b> <b>1 Peter 4,7-14</b>
13	103	1 Samuel 9,15-end Luke 22,14-23	29	143	1 Samuel 19,1-18 Acts 1,1-14
<b>14</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 28,1-6</b> <b>Acts 28,23-end</b>	30	144	1 Samuel 20,1-17 Acts 1,15-end
15	115	1 Samuel 10,1-16 Luke 22,24-30	31	146	1 Samuel 20,18-end Acts 2,1-21
16	120	1 Samuel 10,17-end Luke 22,31-38			

*Each reading ends with these words:*

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

## BENEDICTUS

*Ant:* Blessèd are they that wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb.

Blessèd 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:* Blessèd are they that wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb.

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:

Almighty and everlasting God, who made your only-begotten Son the Redeemer of the world, grant us, we beseech you, so to worship his Precious Blood, and to be so protected by its power against the evils of the present life on earth, that we may enjoy its everlasting fruit in heaven. 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.

R. Thanks be to God.

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

R. Amen.

*Morning Prayer ends with the final Antiphon of Our Lady:*

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

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become a worthy dwelling for Thy Son; grant that we who rejoice in her commemoration may, by her gracious intercession, be delivered from present evils and from everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

## **EVENING PRAYER**

V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.  
R. Be it unto me according to thy word.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh.  
R. And dwelt amongst us.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.  
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same 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

As fades the glowing orb of day, To thee, great source of light, we pray; Blest Three in One, to every heart Thy beams of life and love impart.	At early dawn, at close of day, To thee our vows we humbly pay; May we, mid joys that never end, With thy bright saints in homage bend.
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To God the Father, and the Son,  
And Holy Spirit, Three in One,  
Be endless glory, as before  
The world began, so evermore. Amen.

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

1	Psalms 30	Genesis 4,1-10 John 19,30-35	4	72	Ezekiel 2 2 Corinthians 2
2	127, 128	Zechariah 2,10-end John 3,25-30	5	74	Ezekiel 3 2 Corinthians 3
3	69	Ezekiel 1 2 Corinthians 1	6	78 v. 40-end	Ezekiel 8 2 Corinthians 4

<b>7</b>	<b>63 or 64</b>	<b>Judges 17</b> <b>Luke 19,1-10</b>	20	128	Ezekiel 24,15-end James 1,12-end
8	81	Ezekiel 9 2 Corinthians 5	<b>21</b>	<b>73 v.</b> <b>21-end</b>	<b>Ecclesiasticus 18,1-14</b> <b>Hebrews 2,5-end</b>
9	84	Ezekiel 10,1-19 2 Corinthians 6	22	129	Ezekiel 33,1-20 James 2,1-13
10	91	Ezekiel 11,14-end 2 Corinthians 7	23	130	Ezekiel 33,21-end James 2,14-end
11	93	Ezekiel 12 2 Corinthians 8	24	131	Ezekiel 34,1-16 James 3
12	102	Ezekiel 13,1-16 2 Corinthians 9	25	94	Jeremiah 26,1-5 Mark 1,14-20
13	105	Ezekiel 14,1-11 2 Corinthians 10	26	134	Ezekiel 34,17-end James 4
<b>14</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>Ecclesiasticus 4,11-end</b> <b>Romans 15,14-29</b>	27	135	Ezekiel 36,16-36 James 5
15	107	Ezekiel 14,12-end 2 Corinthians 11,1-15	<b>28</b>	<b>74 v.</b> <b>11-16</b>	<b>Ecclesiasticus 38,24-end</b> <b>Hebrews 8</b>
16	114	Ezekiel 18,1-20 2 Corinthians 11,16-end	29	136	Ezekiel 37,1-14 Mark 1,1-13
17	116	Ezekiel 18,21-32 2 Corinthians 12	30	137	Ezekiel 37,15-end Mark 1,14-20
18	118	Ezekiel 20,1-20 2 Corinthians 13	31	140	Ezekiel 39,21-end Mark 1,21-28
19	127	Ezekiel 20,21-38 James 1,1-11			

*Each reading ends with these words:*

**V.** This is the word of the Lord.

**R.** Thanks be to God.

### MAGNIFICAT

*Ant:* You have come to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, whose Blood speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

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:* You have come to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, whose Blood speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

*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:*

Almighty and everlasting God, who made your only-begotten Son the Redeemer of the world, grant us, we beseech you, so to worship his Precious Blood, and to be so protected by its power against the evils of the present life on earth, that we may enjoy its everlasting fruit in heaven. 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. **R.** Thanks be to God. **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.

### ***Prayers to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus***

Lord Jesus, may your Precious Blood descend upon myself and my family a laver of redemption and of life. Keep me free today from evil, sin, temptation, Satan's attacks and afflictions, fear of darkness, fear of man, sickness, diseases, doubts, anger, all calamities and from all that is not of your Kingdom. Fill me, Lord Jesus, with the gift of your Holy Spirit and grant me the gift of wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discernment so that I will live today in your glory by doing that which is right. Amen.

Precious Blood, ocean of divine mercy: Flow upon us! Precious Blood, most pure offering: Procure us every grace! Precious Blood, hope and refuge of sinners: Atonement for us! Precious Blood, delight of holy souls: Draw us! Amen.  
*(St. Catherine of Siena)*

Eternal Father, I offer you the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in atonement for my sins, and in supplication for the holy souls in Purgatory and for the needs of Holy Church. Amen.

O precious Blood of Jesus, infinite price paid for the redemption of sinful mankind. O Divine Blood, laver of our souls, pleading mercy. With all my heart I adore You, sweet Lord, and offer reparation for the insults, outrages and ingratitude, which You receive from your creatures. May every heart, every tongue, now and forever, praise and thank this priceless balm, this saving Blood, this fountain of crimson Mercy, welling up from the fountain of infinite Love. Amen.

Blessed and praised forevermore be Jesus who hath saved us by His Precious Blood!

## From the Book of Common Prayer

**9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity:** *Grant to us, LORD, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

This is a powerful petition in which we ask God to conform us, both internally and externally, to his righteousness (to what is rightful). Further, there is the honest admission that, in and of ourselves, that is in our wisdom and strength, we cannot please God by seeking to live what we consider to be the righteous and good life. (Note that this Collect is true to the meaning of the original Latin prayer, which is so terse that a literal translation of the second part would be, “*that we, who cannot even exist without thee, may have strength to live according to thee*”.)

Today we learn from our society and in our education and culture that each of us is an autonomous being. That is, I am in charge of my life and destiny and so are you! We think of the human being as being the centre of the universe and if we think of God at all in relation to the world it is as an Extra.

In contrast, genuine Christian thinking sees a person in total dependence upon God for his creation, his existence, his sustenance, his salvation and his eternal destiny. Whatever measure of free will and free determination a person possesses is itself from God and is only beneficial if conformed to the known will of God.

True freedom is not known in the exercise of personal autonomy and pursuing one’s own selfish will, but rather in thinking according to God’s ways and purposes and in doing his will, assisted and guided by his revelation and his Spirit. That is, the genuine life of righteousness and goodness is following the Way of Jesus Christ as his Spirit indwells the heart and mind and directs the will.

This Collect helps us to move from the mindset and spirit of the fallen world and evil age into the mindset and spirit of the kingdom of heaven and of God’s righteousness. And it presupposes that we are diligent readers of the sacred Scriptures where the mind and will of God is revealed to the Church. The Scripture, indeed, often recalls the history of the Israelites in the wilderness in order to provide for us instruction in the moral and spiritual dangers we face when we abandon God. It is our need and duty to make wise use of the present in providing for the life of the age to come.

The Rev’d Dr Peter Toon (+2009)

## Two (well... three) quick, simple and delicious pasta recipes

### 1 - Pasta al tonno e olive (tuna and olives)

For this dish, you can use spaghetti, linguine, o penne. Perhaps even farfalle. The first variant is the simplest dish there is and perhaps you will hesitate even to call it cooking. Here is how to make it:

Cook your preferred pasta. In the meantime mix in a bowl your tinned tuna and olives (black, or green, or kalamata, or a mix of them). You can season it with salt, pepper, (lemon zest, if you are more daring) and even a herb of your choice: origano, thyme, basil or parsley. Or not. It's completely up to you. You can add cherry tomatoes (cut in half) and/or capers. Or not. Finish cooking your pasta, drain it, and mix it with your prepared tuna-olive mix. Pour on it some really good-quality olive oil... and enjoy! (Putting Parmesan on tuna, fish, or seafood pasta is considered a foreign aberration in Italy.)

The second variant envisages some actual cooking. But not too much - after all, its summer.

Put on some water to boil for the pasta. In a frying pan heat some olive oil (no butter, no sunflower, no vegetal oil). It's time for your first choice: add either some finely chopped onion or 2-3 (crushed) garlic cloves. If you choose garlic, you can either remove it after a few minutes or leave it in the pan. If you leave it in, I recommend first you slice it.

In go the olives (whole or cut in half, third, quarter... whatever you prefer), the tinned tuna, and (optional) capers. 2-3 minutes on high flame.

Next series of choices... You can pour in half a glass of white wine. If you do, wait for the alcohol to evaporate. This is the right time to add oregano or thyme, if that's your thing (as they are normally dry, they will have enough time to cook and soften a bit). Next, you can add halved cherry tomatoes (in this case, cook it for roughly 5 mins on high flame), or tinned (chopped, peeled, whatever) tomatoes (in this case you want to cook it at least for 25-30 mins so the tomatoes loose their acidity), or you can just have no tomatoes at all. If you do not add any tomatoes, you can further season your dish with lemon zest. At the end, regardless of your tomato choices, you can add fresh chopped parsley or basil leaves (unless you used oregano or thyme - don't put in too many different herbs; it will confuse your tuna...).

Finish cooking your pasta 1 min. before it is ready, drain it, add it to your tuna in the frying pan and, on high flame, finish cooking your pasta al dente (1 min or so), adding some pasta cooking water if it looks too dry. Enjoy!

## 2 - Spaghetti al limone (lemon)



Now spaghetti with lemon, as a cooked, hot pasta dish, may sound a bit weird to British ears... but trust me, a nation that loves beans on toast and marmite, will get over this dish, too.

A serious caution - you will find versions of this pasta dish online that has cream in it. Curse them

gently in Italian and move on. Cream in this dish is an abomination. Your choice of pasta for this dish should be spaghetti or linguine.

Begin to cook your pasta (150 grams) in abundant boiling, salted water. You will have to drain it a minute or so before it is “al dente” (keep some of the cooking water, just in case).

In the meantime, take a frying pan and put in some butter (how much? it depends on your taste and cholesterol levels), chopped fresh parsley, pepper (you can “play” with the final taste of your dish by choosing a different type of pepper - black, white, or more fragrant variants), and lemon zest (of 1 lemon).

Once the butter has melted (as you know, butter must never be boiled or fried or overheated), add in the pan the juice of 1 lemon, and 1-2 tablespoons of pasta cooking water.

Gently simmer it until the parsley is soft and your sauce is dense (ish).

If your timing is spot on, it is time to drain your almost-al-dente pasta and unite it with your lemony sauce. Continue simmering the pasta gently, adding, if necessary, some more pasta cooking water. Once your pasta is al dente, your dish is ready to be served - this time, unlike in the case of tune and olive pasta, with parmesan and, if you like it, with some more really finely chopped parsley.

In this recipe, you can substitute the parsley with basil. If you do, make sure you add your basil only once your pasta is finished cooking and your frying pan is off the hob. The oils in the basil leaves (that give its taste and fragrance) are quickly and too easily destroyed by excessive heat.

*(Currently on diet, so no carbs... hence the photo from the internet rather than from my kitchen.)*

## Father's Day

*Irene Leader writes:*

I'm writing this on Father's Day, so some quick basic Hebrew for Father's Day. The first man was Adam (אָדָם). The root of the Hebrew word for man is *a-d-m*. Alef, Dalet, Mem.



The letter Alef consists of Yud, Vav, Yud. Yud is a message from God. Vav is the 6<sup>th</sup> letter and represents man. Therefore, man establishes what is in heaven, coming down to what is on earth.

The Dalet represents a portal/doorway to a new path. There is an open Mem and a closed Mem. The open Mem is what God has already made known/ revealed to all. The closed Mem is private to you in your heart. It is not something new, but what has already been revealed, what it means to your life and how to apply it.

The meaning of these letters, then, is: man establishes heaven on earth and will be shown how every man can enter into this path.

Man and husband are the same Hebrew word, as there is no particular word for husband. So, before we can function as a husband, we need to know who we are as a man; to be sure of our identity in Christ.

Father is Alef and Bet: אָב. Bet is house/heart. A father establishes heaven on earth in their heart. Only then are they qualified to establish a godly household.

The Bible tells us that we should bring up children according to their bend – what they are good at and encourage them; then they will not depart from this.

Then children can see God's values, morals, and ethics modelled to them by their godly parents. Woman is Alef, Shin, Heh: אִשָּׁה. Mother is Alef, Mem, Aleph: אִמָּה.

Shin is consumed, fire, passion. Heh is breath of God. The fire of passion, and this is not just sexual, should be between husband and wife in the way they treat each other. The Bible says husbands and wives should submit to each other, to be yielded to, open, and have value for each other. This has to start with a godly husband knowing who he is in Christ, otherwise he will be modelling, to his children, a consuming fire that destroys.

Happy Father's Day – belated.

## Saint of the month: St. Martha, Virgin

A great cook, generous woman, and an unusual head of a household

29 June

Have you ever had the unpleasant experience of listening to an acquaintance unjustifiably criticize someone you consider a friend? It's shocking when we realize how human beings can completely misunderstand one another.

This happens not only in relationships with ordinary people but also with saints. Saint Junipero Serra, the eighteenth-century Franciscan missionary, has been in the news lately; he has been publicly repudiated by descendants of some of the very Californians that he gave his life to serve. The truth about Saint Mary Magdalene, the first person recorded to have seen the Risen Christ, has been abandoned in favour of juicy gossip in popular fiction. And the good, faithful woman known as Saint Martha of Bethany has been transmogrified into something unrecognizable by a sleazy novel.

But the Gospel brings light to those in darkness, so it is not surprising that simply reading the Gospels can help us discover the truth about Martha. The woman that we call Saint Martha of Bethany, who is commemorated on the Church calendar on July 29, is identified in only three passages of the Gospels, but those passages can help us understand why the Church considers her a saint.

### *What the Gospels say about Martha*



Luke 10,38-42 recounts what happened shortly after Jesus and his disciples entered a village. In some towns, Jesus was welcomed; in others, he was rejected. In this village—which John's Gospel tells us was Bethany, a village approximately two miles from Jerusalem—a woman named Martha welcomed both Jesus and his disciples into her home. According to Luke, Martha's sister Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to him.

Martha famously responded to her sister's apparent laziness by asking Jesus to tell Mary to get back to work and help her. Jesus gave the famous reply: "*Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.*"

In John 12,1-2, we learn that Jesus returned to stay in Bethany during Holy Week immediately before his Crucifixion. As many commentators have pointed out over the centuries, Mary's home in Bethany appears to have been Jesus' home base in that area, the place where he and his disciples stayed during his final week and on other previous occasions.

In the eleventh chapter of John's Gospel, we learn that Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus that their brother, Lazarus, was seriously ill. Rather than return immediately, Jesus delayed. In hindsight, we can see that he delayed precisely because he wanted to perform his greatest miracle outside the Resurrection and raise his dead friend back to life. But Martha and Mary lived and grieved through the death of a beloved brother before Jesus arrived in Bethany and called his friend Lazarus to come out of the grave and back among the living.

### ***What the Gospels teach us about Martha***

What can we conclude from these somewhat sparse details about the character of this saint of the Church?

The above passage from Luke, with its description of the different responses of Martha and Mary to their Divine Guest, has often been used by Christians over the centuries to point out the importance of balancing the contemplative aspect of Christian life with the active life. Martha was busy making dinner, while Mary knew that her time with Jesus was limited, so she focused her entire attention on him. Like Martha, we all need to learn again and again to seek God in every moment, particularly through prayer, rather than focusing on mere accomplishments. But that is not the only thing we know about Martha.

Anyone who has ever hosted a party will notice in John 12,1-2 that Martha served dinner to Jesus and his disciples six days before the Passover. That is, Jesus came to someone's home with at least twelve grown men for dinner. Since the Gospels do not refer to Martha as a wealthy or important woman, it appears she was simply an ordinary woman with a big heart, ready and willing to share what she had with others.

When John 12,2 says that "Martha served", is that only a statement about the name of the owner of the home? Or is it a statement about the warmth of Martha's home, or even the quality of her cooking? Did the disciples find it easy to hurry from Jerusalem to Martha's house because they

knew that a great meal and great conversation were awaiting them? We will never know for certain, but we can emulate Martha's hospitality and try to make family, friends, and even strangers welcome in our homes.

It is easy to overlook the fact that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were an unusual family grouping. In Jewish culture at that time, men and women were expected to marry, and it would have been considered odd for three grown siblings to live together. It would, for that matter, be considered odd today. There is no mention of them being too young to marry or widowed. Were any of the siblings considered unmarriageable?

Martha's sister Mary has often been linked with three other women described in the Gospels—the woman caught in adultery, the woman who wiped Jesus' feet with her hair, and/or the formerly possessed Mary Magdalene—probably because that might explain why Martha and Lazarus were not married. If Mary had lived a scandalous life, that might have deterred other residents of Bethany from seeking marriage with her brother and sister. Or perhaps the unacceptable sibling was Lazarus. Since there are no recorded words of Lazarus, was he what we would call a “special needs” child? An older man with a wild past? Whatever the explanation, the family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus shows us that even Jesus' friends probably didn't have picture-perfect families.

### ***Martha's faith***

But Martha's words in John, chapter 11, shows she was more than a great cook, generous woman, or an unusual head of a household. Specifically, Martha believed a great truth that the High Priest of the Jewish people himself was unwilling to accept. When Jesus was trying to prepare Martha to understand what he was about to do—bring a dead man back to life—he said, “*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.*” Martha responded with the astonishing words: “*Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.*”

Even though Martha clearly did not expect Jesus to raise her brother from the dead, she trusted him. Somehow, she knew that he was not the type of Messiah that most Jews were awaiting, the military leader who would free them from Roman rule. She knew he was the Son of God, even though she was probably not certain what that meant.

The real character of Saint Martha of Bethany is not defined by her not-so-subtle pressure for help from her sister. Instead, the Church calls her a saint because of her generosity, her love for her family and friends, and her astounding faith in the Son of God.

*(originally posted in CWR July 29, 2021)*

## Know the Bible! - The Book of Genesis

Divided into 50 chapters, the first book in the Bible, called Genesis or First Book of Moses, is the second longest book of the Bible, containing many of the best known and most loved stories, such as Noah, etc.

The stories in Genesis are thousands of years old and had been around for some time before they were written down. These stories were transmitted from one Hebrew generation to the other and there is no way now of knowing their origins. Once these stories started agglomerating around what we call the “Laws of Moses,” scribes and priests started to note them down - both the Laws and the stories - and, over centuries, edited them in a beautifully constructed book. These scribes and priests, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, made sure that nothing important is lost, nothing untrue finds its way into these texts, and that all this tradition, stories, and laws are preserved for future generations.

But why was Genesis written? The whole Bible is about God and his relationship with us. Genesis sets the stage for this divine-human storyline. We learn about the defects in our relationship with God and of its reasons (sin). Inevitably, this teaches us also about ourselves: about human nature (how we are) and purpose (why are we in this world). The image Genesis gives us about the human race is not always the most flattering...

It is also in the Book of Genesis that we learn about the origins of Israel, this small group of semi-nomadic tribes, chosen by God. We learn about Israel’s call, their many struggles and failures, but, most importantly, we learn about how Israel becomes a sign of universal hope.

*(A quick detour: chapters were first introduced in the Bible only at the beginning of the thirteenth century and verses became numbered even later, in 1551. Before that the Bible was divided into books only and it was not easy to find a verse or phrase in it.)*

Genesis can be divided into two main parts. The first part looks at the relationship between God and the human race (chapters 1-11), the second at the relationship between God and Israel, or their ancestors (chapters 12-50). In between these two main parts sit a brief but important section: the promises made to Abram (later called Abraham) and, through him, to the human race. Both these main sections can be divided into 4 sub-sections:

I.1 - CREATION (ch. 1-2) — God creates everything, makes chaos into order, and brings in humans to help him run it. Humans represent God (are his image) and are supposed to reflect, even if imperfectly, God’s qualities. Humans get to live in this world with God. The Garden of Eden is like a Temple. There was a time, then, when God and humans could be in the same place, at the same time, in harmony.

I.2 - CURSE (ch. 3-6) — A serpent arrives and things start getting out of hand. He tricks humans to rebel against God. Supernatural evil corrupts the world but so do humans too: Cain, violence, wars, lies, etc. However, there is hope: one day a woman will crush the serpent's head. This part contains some difficult-to-understand stories (about giants, etc.).

I.3 - JUDGEMENT & SALVATION (ch. 7-9) — The chaotic waters return, the universal Flood destroys life on earth. However, God loves human life and through one righteous family (Noah) God rescues our race.

I.4 - NATIONS (ch. 9-12) — Humans multiply and they decide to build a “temple” to their own glory, the Tower of Babel, rebelling against God. God confuses their foolish plans and divides them into different nations. They all got their own language, their own land, and their own gods...

“INTERLUDE” (ch. 12, 15, 17, 22) — God, as with Noah, chooses again a righteous family (Abraham) to start something new. God makes a promise to Abraham: his own presence, many descendants, land, and the transformation of Abraham himself into a blessing for all nations. This promise passes down to Abraham's family (Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons).

II.1 - ABRAHAM (ch. 12-24) — Abraham is called out of his land, he never settles, and then is tested by God. He passes the test thanks to his faith. Later Israel will be called out of Egypt, wander in the desert, and put to test.

II.2 - ISAAC (ch. 25-27) — Isaac is blessed with great wealth and lives his life in the promised land (unlike Abraham). He has two sons. Later Israel, too, will live in the promised land, become wealthy and powerful, with two kingdoms: Israel and Judah.

II.3 - JACOB (ch. 28-36) — He tricks his brother out of his inheritance and because of this he has to flee and live in exile. His name is later changed to Israel and he eventually returns to live in the promised land. Later we will see Israel (the nation) going into exile and returning.

II.4 - THE 12 PATRIARCHS (ch. 37-50) — The 12 sons of Jacob become the 12 tribes of Israel. The youngest, Joseph, the favourite son, is sold into slavery by his own, and his integrity and wisdom are tested. He emerges from this as “ruler” and “saviour” of many people. Another son, Judah, who originally comes up with the idea of selling Joseph, redeems himself at the end by offering his own life for Benjamin. The prophecy will be given later: from Judah will come a (messianic) King who will rule the nations in justice.

## Hailes Abbey, now in ruins, was once home to Christ's Blood

As this month is dedicated to the Precious Blood, and in preparation for our parish pilgrimage to Glastonbury, writing something about the Holy Blood of Hailes seems appropriate. Hailes is a place that once was a thriving place of prayer and work that now lies in ruins. The 13<sup>th</sup>-century Cistercian abbey in Gloucestershire, England, a key pilgrimage site in the Middle Ages, was suppressed by King Henry VIII in 1539, stripped of its material wealth, and left to return to nature.

The abbey at Hailes in Gloucestershire held this famous relic from 1270 until 1538. Hoping in good weather for the rest of this summer, you may decide to make the three-hour-long journey and make a lovely and spiritually, culturally enriching weekend out of it.

### *History*

Hailes – or Hayles – Abbey was founded in 1246 by Richard Earl of Cornwall, the brother of King Henry III (who had been crowned in St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester), in thanksgiving for surviving a shipwreck. Hailes Abbey Church was completed in 1251 and dedicated in November of that year. It is recorded that thirteen bishops said Mass, each at his own altar with Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln, celebrating at the High Altar.

Five years later – 1256 – Earl Richard was elected King of the Romans and he and his wife were crowned at Aix la Chapelle. His son, Edmund, was in Germany in 1268, and obtained “*what was believed to be a portion of the blood shed by Christ on the Cross — the Holy Blood,*” explains English Heritage, which cares for the Abbey. “*The relic was thought to have come from the coronation regalia of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor. To the medieval mind, there could not have been a better provenance, and the relic was widely accepted as authentic.*” Edmund divided the relic between a college he founded at Hertfordshire and Hailes, where it arrived on the Feast of the Holy Cross.

Hailes became the go-to place, attracting prominent people such as Margery Kempe, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century mystic. In 1417, while on her way home from the Spanish shrine of Santiago de Compostela, Kempe stopped in at Hailes and went to confession. The chronicles record that she received forgiveness for her sins “*with loud cries and tears and boisterous weeping. Her devotion impressed the monks, who invited her among them for further discussion. Quoting from the Gospel, Margery rebuked the monks for swearing, causing them great wonder and leaving some right well pleased.*”

Several miracles are attributed to the relic, including the conversion of some skeptical clerics. But no miracle could stop the reforming fervour of

Henry VIII. Anne Boleyn sent some of her chaplains to enquire into the “*abomynable abuse*” of pilgrimage to Hailes. Three years later, the shrine of the Holy Blood was stripped of its precious metal and jewelled adornment and then dismantled. Soon after, Hailes fell victim to Henry VIII’s Suppression of the Monasteries. In 1539 Abbot Sagar and the community of 21 monks signed the surrender deed. The church was rapidly reduced to ruins. On 24 November 1539 Relic was destroyed publicly at St Paul’s Cross (London) by John Hilsey, Bishop of Rochester. From that time on, the old saying, ‘as sure as God’s in Gloucestershire’ did not mean quite so much to pilgrims.

### ***Legend***

A sixteenth century document, probably written by a monk of Hailes, tells how while Christ was hanging on the cross, a Jewish convert to Christianity held a small phial to Jesus side and collected some of the blood which flowed from his wounds. Other Jews, who had remained true to their faith, heard about this, reported him and caused him to be arrested. He was locked in a cell outside the city of Jerusalem where he remained for 42 years with only the phial of blood for company.

One day, while the Emperors Titus and Vespasian were returning home after sacking the city of Jerusalem, they passed the small cell which housed the Jewish convert. Eager to satisfy their curiosity they made enquiries about the origins of the cell and were told the story of the Jew and the phial of blood. They ordered the cell to be unlocked and to their astonishment they found the Jew still alive and clutching the phial of blood.

As the Jew refused to hand over the phial, the Emperors wrenched it from him and immediately the Jew lost both sight and speech and within a few seconds he crumbled into powder, as dead as a stone. The relic of the Holy Blood was taken to Rome, where it remained in an honoured place in the Temple of Peace, until it was captured by the Emperor Charlemagne and taken to Germany. This legend was the link - sufficiently good explanation for medieval man - between the Cross and Hailes.

Was it an authentic Relic of Christ’s Blood? Most probably it wasn’t. Does it matter though? Isn’t the fact that this “relic” moved thousands of pilgrims to penance, prayer, acts of charity, and conversion of life much more important? Today, visitors can wander through the ruins where pilgrims once gazed upon Christ’s Blood, receiving untold spiritual benefits and hopefully they will be moved to say a prayer. English Heritage recommends it as a “great picnic spot.” Behold, then, a lovely place to visit that can nurture our soul, our body, and our mind.

## Chocolate: the gift of heaven or the deceit of the evil...?

For many of us, in our (Anglo- or Roman) Catholic tradition giving up chocolate for Lent is almost a given. Outside of the holy season of Lent, perhaps the only moral issue we might have with chocolate is its origin (fair trade or not) or environmental impact (plastic, transport, palm oil, etc.). Apart from these issues, we would struggle to see why would there be any problem with chocolate. This was not the case for Christians in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Long theological disputes surrounded the question: is it licit for a Christian to eat chocolate? The main issue was that, through the reports of Spanish conquerors, chocolate became quickly associated with Aztec religious rituals. The Aztecs regarded chocolate as a sacred elixir, a gift from the gods. It also had its role during (human) sacrifices. A Franciscan friar also reported in 1569 that local tribes in today's Mexico, make chocolate offering for the dead.

Theologians also had some problems when it came to chocolate and rules of fasting. On many penitential days, and on every day of Lent, Christians had to reduce food intake drastically by law; on many of these days meat was eliminated from the menu. Now, back then chocolate was a beverage and it was a plant... so, strictly speaking, one could drink cups and cups of hot (probably spicy, only later sweet) chocolate without breaking the letter of the law on fasting. Yet, theologians felt something wasn't right. Chocolate was too luxurious, too indulgent, too exotic and exciting a beverage to have no limits imposed on it during days of fasting, abstinence, and penance.

On the other hand, missionaries in the New World often used chocolate to treat minor illnesses and keep their strength up. These Catholic priests naturally played a key role in bringing chocolate over to Europe. Records tell us that in 1585 a Japanese ambassador to Philip II of Spain was very impressed when he visited a convent of Poor Clares of Veronica. The nuns gave him chocolate they had prepared themselves!

The moral and theological debate over chocolate went on for a good 100 years. Dominicans were very much against it, the Pope's opinion was asked at one point, even the Holy Inquisition got involved.

The question of chocolate became even more complex due to a habit of noble ladies. In 1625 Bishop Don Bernardino de Salazar prohibited in his diocese the consumption of chocolate -wait for it! - during Mass. The peninsulares, Spanish Catholic noble women in Latin America, had their maids deliver them chocolate during mass. Their justification: they claimed chocolate prevented fainting and fatigue during the long celebrations of Mass,

overall having medicinal properties. The Bishop - probably quite rightly - argued that the consumption of chocolate during mass was not only distracting but also drew attention away from worshipping and praising God properly. The Bishop, soon after threatening the women with excommunication, died - after having consumed chocolate. It was rumoured that he had been poisoned.

The next step in settling the debate happened in 1666 when Pope Alexander VII was given some chocolate to drink so he can have an opinion. He was so disgusted by the taste of it that he decided there was no need to ban it.

Books and pamphlets were published with titles such as “*The moral question: does chocolate break the fast or not?*” and “*Chocolate and tobacco; the ecclesiastical and natural fast.*” The Jesuits, who had commercial interests in cacao production and distribution, secured a favourable ruling from Cardinal Brancaccio and published 16 pages “*On the use of chocolate*” in 1664. They even wrote a little ode to the cacao tree: “*Grown in lands afar, o tree/ of Mexico the glory/ Fruitful with your juice you sate/ The gods with – purest chocolate.*” The pamphlet was so popular that it had to be reprinted four times in 10 years.

However, by then the whole question was interesting only to theologians as chocolate had conquered the hearts (and stomachs) of the Christians world. So much so that in 1692, for example, the Pope Innocent received a request from Carmelites monks in Madrid for a dispensation to drink chocolate inside the walls of their convent.

Miles Pattenden writes: “Pope Innocent refused the Carmelites’ request and it was not, in fact, until almost a century later that Pope Pius VI issued a definitive ruling that clerics could drink chocolate (*albeit only away from Church premises!*). Yet, by then, at least three 18<sup>th</sup>-century popes, Benedict XIII, Clement XII, and Benedict XIV, had been keen chocolate drinkers.”

For us, contemporary Christians, the whole debate may seem strange if not outright ridiculous. However, it is important to remember how important rules about fasting used to be in the Church.

What we can and must learn from 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century Christians is the sensibility to moral and religious issues. Does the production of the chocolate we buy include child labour, the exploitation of nature, deforestation? Is it “fair trade” or are farmers and producers exploited in the process? Does my money go to help local communities and local economy or does it increase social injustice by making the rich even richer? Even in choosing our chocolate, let’s not be unconscious consumers but Christians who, while enjoying the good things of this creation, try to make this world a better place, awaiting the new one to come.

## The Psalms

*Psalm 39: O Lord, what shall be my end? In thee I hope.*

Psalm 39 on the surface seems to be a typical lament psalm. However, its tone is so personal that, almost uniquely amongst the psalms, it gives us a deep insight into the struggles of the psalmist's (David?) soul. The main topic of Psalm 39 is closely related to those of Psalms 73 and 90 and of the Book of Job and could be summarised in the following words: "God and man" and "God and sin."

**Verses 1-3** — Without a proper introduction, Psalm 39 starts with what could be described as a mix of self-reflection and confession. Disappointment, failure, and distress are the key words. In his confession, the psalmist intends to expose before God quite frankly the struggles which rage in his soul as well as the fact that his accomplishments continually fall short of his intentions. He looks into his own heart, filled with terror, and feels hopeless and helpless because of his sin and weakness.

David sees his suffering as something inflicted on him by God; he is being sorely tried by them but he wants to submit himself to God in silent suffering. However, he wants to do so for the wrong reason: he does not want to give his enemies an occasion for rejoicing.

His self-imposed self-control, though, lacking any solid foundation, collapses and David gives voice to his suffering, both physical and spiritual. Ashamed of his unfaithfulness to his own previous proposition, now he comes into God's presence to disclose the distress of his soul.

**Verses 4-5** — The prayer that follows shows how seriously he takes this failure. However, the agitation seen in the first verses, perhaps under the influence of prayer, gives place to calm resignation. His prayer, his dialogue with God, helps him to recover his right mind in the midst of his physical and mental suffering. He can now see very clearly the transient nature and futility of human life and ask God to be able to see everything from his perspective, from the divine perspective, that is, of eternity. David has finally climbed out from the most common pit of us all: the overestimation of one's own importance. Behold, the power of sincere prayer...

**Verses 6-7** — Our rebellious self-assurance will only leave us when we finally see and accept the brevity of our life. This is no pessimism in any way but rather a sober realism cleansed of any kind of illusion. Now David is ready to see the true nature of God, and to realise that it is in God alone that he is able to find comfort and support when every human support and

assurance, his own self-support and self-assurance included, have proved unreliable. In a brave decision, the psalmist casts all his sorrows and hopes on God. From now on, only to Him he is tied, only with Him he is united.

**Verses 8-9** — The same knowledge of the brevity and futility of every human life opens David's eyes to his sins as well. Now he sees how he failed in his main responsibility: in living a godly life which points to the reality of God and bears witness to it.

He renews his previous resolution of silent submission to God but not anymore for the wrong reason of silencing his enemies. Instead, he wants his life to become a witness to God's existence and providence. By now he has come to know his own powerlessness too well and he knows that he cannot achieve anything without God's help.

These verses of deep recognition of reality, of God's nature, and of his own, in the next verses are followed with the prayer that God would relieve David from the force of his hand which presses heavily upon him.

**Verses 10-11** — Seeing the finiteness of human nature, David now sees the fact of death as God's judgement on sin. The words of 1 Cor 15,56 ("*The sting of death is sin*") are woven into the picture of the moth, illustrating the "destructive" effect of God's judgement on those who are guilty.

**Verses 12-13** — Without God's grace man is lost. David is aware of this truth when he dares to ask God to grant his prayer. He knows that he is not entitled to demand from God protection and deliverance; like a guest and sojourner, he must rely on the kindness and mercy of him to whose protection he has entrusted himself. This, however, does not prevent him from clinging to his bond and communion with God. After all, without those, no prayer would be possible at all. Fear of God and trust in God go hand-in-hand in his soul, showing the genuineness of his faith and the sincerity of his prayer.

So shocking is the recognition of his sinfulness that David will already rest content if God will no longer look up on him in anger, but will look away from him (see Job 7,19 and 14,6). He knows that he wouldn't merit more than a brief sigh of relief before he enters upon the way that leads through the dark gate of death.

At this point we must remember that the melancholy of this song is due to the limits which, with few exceptions (for example Psalm 73), the fact of death sets to the Old Testament, and beyond which the psalmist does not dare to go in his reflection. A silent and yet eloquent testimony to the necessity of salvation Christ's death and resurrection will bring around.

## Vicar

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## Parish Hall & Activities

*With enquiries about **hiring the Parish Hall, joining the Munch Club or the Choir**, please, contact the Parish Office.*

A priest is always available for Confession, spiritual direction, or for a simple chat half an hour before every Service, or at any other time by appointment! For service times and other information about our churches and services (including weddings and funerals), please visit our website:

[www.stpaulsweymouth.org](http://www.stpaulsweymouth.org)