

The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor

Registered Charity no. 234025

Father Peter Cryan

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Newsletter for the week of 10th March 2024

Sunday Readings Cycle B

Weekday Readings Cycle II

Readings for 4th Lent Sunday: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23; Psalm 136; Ephesians 2:4-10; John 3: 14-21

Saturday 9th March 5.30pm 1st MASS of the 4th SUNDAY of LENT

Sunday 10th March 10.30am MASS of the 4th SUNDAY of LENT

Monday 11th March

Tuesday 12th March

Wednesday 13th March 11.30am

Thursday 14th March

Friday 15th March 11.30am

Saturday 16th March 10.00am Mass with Stations of the Cross after Mass

10.50-11.20am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 16th Mar 5.30pm 1st Mass of the 5th Sunday of Lent

Sunday 17th Mar 10.30am Mass of the 5th Sunday of Lent

Readings for 5th Lent Sunday: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 50 ; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33



CHILDREN'S CATECHIST & CHILDREN'S SUNDAY LITURGY

Sarina Bloor is our new Children's catechist and holds the **Children's Liturgy** on Sunday in the Community Room during school term time for children up to about 12 yrs. She will spend a bit of time each week in *Christ the King Primary School* to be a **parish link** with staff, children & their parents & to give them **support**. The post is in development- initially for up to a year & open to review. Payment for the post is drawn from the *Our Mission Together (OMT)* money set aside for projects in the parish that stands at about £12k at this point.

CRAFT CLUB

Wed 13th March 12.15-2.15pm after morning Mass

STATIONS of the CROSS

Sat. 16th March after 10.00am morning Mass

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GREAT GENEROSITY

Last Sunday £183.85

Cafod Lent Fast Appeal £30.00 (final total £202.20)

REGULAR GIVING ENVELOPES

The new sets of envelopes for the year starting on 7th April, the Sunday after Easter are ready for issuing in the next few weeks. Would any parishioner who wishes to start using them please let Fr. Peter know by printing your name & phone number on the clipboards at the church entrances. If any existing user wishes to cease using envelopes, or cease & move to a standing order would they too print their names, phone no. and indicate the change they wish..

DAY RETREAT

Next Sat 16th March 9.30am-3.30pm at St. Alban's for their parishioners but particularly for Ministers of the Word & Ministers of Holy Communion. St. Edward parishioners are invited to join them . See poster on the noticeboard.

GET IN TOUCH QUICKLY –IF YOU ARE SICK If you or your relative enters Macclesfield Hospital let Fr.

Peter know as soon as possible tel: 01625 423576 or by e-mail st.edmacc@gmail.com

DIARY of EVENTS

-Sat 30th March start of B.S.T.(British Summer Time);-Wed 20th March Church Cleaning; -Sun 31st March Easter

MOTHERING SUNDAY & MOTHER'S DAY

Today, Mid-Lent Sunday is *Mothering Sunday* and is an opportunity to show gratitude & affection to our mothers & express our thanks to them for bringing us into the world. *Mother's Day* is relatively modern celebration in the USA going back about 100 years, but there was a far older holiday of *Mothering Sunday*. In the 16th century, in England Christians kept the custom of returning to their "mother church" for a service held on *Laetare Sunday*, 4th Sunday of Lent. A "mother church" could be the parish where one was baptized, the local parish church, or even the closest cathedral, viewed as the mother church of all parishes in a given diocese. Those who practiced this custom were said to have gone "*a-mothering*," and soon it became known as "*Mothering Sunday*." As the popularity of "Mothering Sunday" grew, it became a day when domestic servants were given leave to be with their families. The day became one of the few times a year where a grown family could gather, as working families often had conflicting schedules. The day became a day for a family reunion, and it naturally evolved to include all mothers within the celebration. The tradition of children giving gifts their mothers seems to have come from children picking flowers for their mothers on their long walk back home from church.

Who Decides If Unborn Lives Matter?

Recent news stories reveal a contradictory attitude to how we treat unborn lives in our society.

It was reported in the news last week that parents in England who have experienced the devastation of losing a baby before 24 weeks of pregnancy can apply for a 'baby loss certificate' from 22 February of this year. The very next day, however, the Health Secretary revealed she would support an amendment to decriminalise women who procure an abortion beyond 24 weeks, on which MPs will get a free vote next month along with another amendment to lower the 'upper' legal abortion limit from 24 to 22 weeks. Is an unborn baby to be cherished and mourned if it is lost, or it is something that can be terminated up to birth? We cannot have it both ways.

The Anscombe Bioethics Centre supports and welcomes the efforts to support parents who experience miscarriage. Around a quarter of a million miscarriages are thought to occur every year in the country.

One of the independent Pregnancy Loss Review's recommendations was the introduction of baby loss certificates to provide parents, on a voluntary basis, with official recognition of their deceased baby or babies. So far, applicants who were living in England at the time of their loss can already apply for a certificate and there are plans to introduce them in Wales soon. In Scotland there is a memorial book, created by the Scottish government and National Records of Scotland, where parents can record any miscarriages that occur before 24 weeks and receive a certificate if requested. Death certificates of babies who die after 24 weeks in the womb (i.e. stillbirths) already exist, but until recently there was no official certificate to document a death before that point in the pregnancy. Hence, it is good that the different parts of the United Kingdom are seeking to provide comfort to grieving parents who want their loss in early pregnancy to receive official recognition. It is also good that improvements to maternity care and birth trauma support are a priority in the Government's women's health strategy in England.

These are sensitive and thoughtful ways to support parents. By stark contrast, to decriminalise women who procure an abortion after 24 weeks flies in the face of the apparent recognition that a miscarriage is the loss of a baby, of a person who was to be loved but is mourned instead. But both news stories have something in common: whether the unborn baby has status as a person is thought to depend on the parents recognising its personhood or not. If the mother mourns for her lost baby, she may voluntarily request a certificate. If she does not choose to recognise her baby as a person, she may be permitted (the current proposals succeed) to terminate its life with an abortion at any stage of the pregnancy for any reason.

A humane society is one in which our status as persons with dignity and rights is recognised to be innate, and given simply by virtue of being a human being. Every human life is a person. All persons have dignity. We do not receive our dignity by being the citizen of any state, nor by our dignity being recognised by any other person. Hence, parents cannot decide to deny the dignity and rights of their unborn children, just as the government cannot strip the parents of their dignity and rights.

Our society's growing support for parents who suffer the loss of their baby is already pointing to the truth: that a life lost is mourned for because it is a life that must be cherished, not ended.

• For more information on the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, see our website: www.bioethics.org.uk
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FURTHER THREAT TO THE UNBORN OF ABORTION UP TO BIRTH

Bishop Mark writes: "In the next couple of weeks an attempt is to be made to widely decriminalise abortion up to the birth. This is a further assault on the sanctity of human life in our society. This extreme amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill is being made by Diana Johnson MP and parliamentarians will be under pressure to support the amendment on grounds of compassion for mothers who seek to abort their unborn child beyond the legal limits. The effect would be to withdraw legal protection from the unborn. It is important to make our voice heard in support of the unborn child. Please contact your Member of Parliament, **David Rutley MP** at House of Commons London SW1A 0AA or email: david.rutley.mp@parliament.uk to ask that they oppose the decriminalization of abortion up to birth.. The *Right to Life* website has details under 'Take Action' which enables you to find and contact your MP directly and the website of the *Society for the Protection of Unborn Children* has helpful information under 'Resources.' The *Right to Life* website also has details of an alternative amendment by *Caroline Ansell MP* to reduce the legal limit for abortion from 24 to 22 weeks on the basis of the increased survival rates for babies being born at 22 and 23 weeks. We cannot doubt the impact which your e-mail or letter will have in making known opposition to decriminalizing abortion up to birth and in support of the value of every human life." Visit <https://righttolife.org.uk/littlefighters> or <https://www.spuc.org.uk/>



Encountering Christ

The Wednesday Prayer Custom for Homes, Schools & Parishes

Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families



Set aside 10-15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross and remain still for a minute of settling silence.



Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Read the Gospel, aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.

1

READ

The Gospel for Sunday 10th March 2024

NICODEMUS

Jesus said to Nicodemus: “The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God’s only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God”.

Taken from John 3:14-21 The Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year B

2

REFLECT

After reading the Gospel, did any words stand out? If they did, ponder or discuss them before proceeding with the reflection.

After Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus comes this reflection on Nicodemus’ visit. Is it Jesus’ reflection or the evangelist’s? The text does not make it clear. Throughout the gospel of John people are coming to Jesus and judging themselves by their reactions to Jesus. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son. In his turn the Son does not judge, but we judge ourselves by our reaction to him. So at the wedding at Cana the disciples believe in him and see his glory. In the Temple the Jews refuse belief and are condemned. Then comes Nicodemus in secret and in fear. At this point he is sitting on the fence, afraid of the Pharisees - but by the time of the burial he has decided for Jesus. After Nicodemus the Samaritan woman approaches Jesus. Cheeky and unbelieving at first, she is won over by Jesus’ playful persistence. And so on - the Jews on one side, the man healed at the Pool of Bethzatha on the other: the Jews on one side, the man blind from birth on the other. The decision is ours too.

When confronted by Jesus, do we come to the light so that our deeds may be known, or do we shun the light?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

3

RESPOND & REQUEST

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, hope, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, joy, forgiveness, hope or something else.

4

PRAY FOR FAMILIES

This Wednesday’s word for our school families is SELF GIVING!

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for our present and future Church, particularly for the families connected to our schools. You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as:

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. 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.

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 17th March 2024



1st Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16. 19-23

The Broken Covenant

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy. Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, "Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation." And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up.'



In the first readings for Sundays in Lent we have worked through the promising but tragic history of Israel. It is a history of promises by God, of broken promises and fresh starts by Israel. We have seen this in the stories of the covenant with Noah, of Abraham's obedient trust, and of the commands given to Moses to keep Israel faithful to the Lord. Now we come to the story of great disaster, inevitably brought on by Israel's repeated failure and infidelity. There is an underlying theme to this history of Israel: fidelity brings prosperity and healing punishment is the inevitable consequence of desertion of the Lord. In this final chapter of Chronicles the historian looks back at the ultimate catastrophe of Exile in Babylon, and the return of a renewed Israel to the Holy City. Even then the promised blessing of God would seem long delayed. God's people were an oppressed little community, huddled round Jerusalem, harassed by their neighbours and dominated by one foreign power after another. After some years they did summon up energy and resources to rebuild the Temple, but they continued to yearn for the decisive intervention of God which would enable them to serve their Lord in freedom and total dedication. **Do you always show fidelity to the Lord?**



2nd Reading: Ephesians 2:4-10

The Grace of God

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ - it is through grace that you have been saved - and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus. This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.



The Letter to the Ephesians is usually considered to be an early commentary on Paul rather than from the Apostle's own hand. The Letter reflects on the salvation won by Christ. After the record in the first reading of the repeated failures of Israel, the message (twice repeated) that salvation is by grace alone, is particularly apt. Grace here means not a substance poured into our souls to provide some sort of salvific energy, but is the unmerited favour and choice by God. It is a personal relationship rather than something material. God has smiled on each of us and invited us into his friendship. In the light of this gift of friendship we are strengthened and encouraged to serve him, so that this gift of his friendship becomes an ever stronger and more important element in our lives. God shows us his love and we respond. He shows us even greater love: the greatest gift of all is his Son and his salvation, the new life won for us by Christ.

How do you respond to this abounding love of God?

“ God has smiled on each of us and invited us into his friendship. ”

The Wednesday Word Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God

**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**