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Newsletter for the week of 15th March 2026 *Sunday Readings Cycle A* *Weekday Readings Cycle II*

Readings for the 5th Sunday of Lent 1 Samuel 16: 1b,6-7, 10-13a; Psalm 23(22); Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

Psalm's Response: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want

Saturday 14th March 5.45pm 1st MASS of the 4th SUNDAY of LENT - Mothering Sunday

Sunday 15th March 10.30am MASS of the 4th SUNDAY of LENT - Mothering Sunday

Monday 16th March 9.15am Mass

Tuesday 17th March FEAST: St. Patrick, bishop, missionary, patron of Ireland

Wednesday 18th March 11.30am Mass (Optional : St. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop doctor of the Church)

Thursday 19th March Solemnity: St. Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Friday 20th March 1.00pm Mass (in Hospital Chapel)

Saturday 21st March 10.00am Mass

10.30-11am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 21st March 5.45pm 1st Mass of the 5th Sunday of Lent -

Sunday 22nd March 10.30am Mass of the 5th Sunday of Lent

Readings for 5th Sunday of Lent Ezekiel 37:12-14; Psalm 130(129); Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45

STATIONS of the CROSS & LENT SOUP LUNCH

Lent Fridays: 20th & 27th March at 12noon in the Community Room: Stations of the Cross in the Community Room followed by a simple Lent Soup Lunch organised by members of the PPC

CHURCH GROUNDS CLEAN-UP

Next Sat 21st March 2-4pm The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) are organising a clean up after the winter that has brought many branches, twigs & deposited detritus down on the car park & paths Come & spend an hour or two helping to give a spring clean. Wear old shoes & work gloves if you have them. Bring a stiff garden brush or rake if you have one.

MISSIONARY APPEAL

Next Sat 21st /Sun 22nd This year is the turn of a congregation of missionary sisters: *The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of Christ* were founded in 1937 in Nigeria by the then Archbishop. Charles Heerey CSSP. He had come as a young missionary priest with a group of Irish Spiritan Missionaries to Nigeria in 1922 and he was moved with compassion when he saw the deplorable conditions many were forced to live in. It inspired him to establish this Congregation of Sisters to work to alleviate in particular, the very high maternal & infant mortality that he found. Now the Sister's engage in social work, teaching, medical care, catechetical & pastoral care. The two sisters, one to St. Alban's & one to St. Edwards coming next weekend to tell us about their work and to make an appeal, are based in Birmingham.

FUNERAL

This Mon 16th March 10.30am ; a funeral service for Michael "Mick" Earles age 82 yrs. died 14th Feb. in Carmel Lodge Nursing Home, Adlington, formerly of Cedar Rise. May he rest in peace!

THANK YOU for YOUR GENEROUS GIVING

Last Sunday's Collection £261.64 Cafod Lent Appeal £83.50 (Accumulated Total £247.150)

FOOD BANK

With the prospect of increased fuel, heating & food prices, remember those who need to seek help from the *Silk Life* Food Bank. See the suggested items listed on the noticeboards e.g.: UHT milk, stewed steak, beef casserole, chili con carne, instant mash - also toiletries and baby items.

GET IN TOUCH QUICKLY –IF YOU ARE SICK If you or your relative enters Macclesfield Hospital or East Cheshire Hospice let Fr. Peter Cryan know as soon as possible tel: 01625 423576 or by e-mail st.edmacc@gmail.com

DIARY OF EVENTS

Sun 29th March Palm & Passion Sunday and start of British Summer Time (BST);

Thurs 2nd April 7.00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Friday 3rd April 3pm Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday

Sat 4th April 8.00pm Vigil Mass of Easter

Sun 5th April 10.30am Easter Day Mass

Sun 17th May 1st Holy Communion

Fr. PIERRE AL RABI: VICTIM of WAR, MARTYR FOR PEACE

Before being killed in a strike, priest in Southern Lebanon declared: 'We will remain until death'



In recent days, Christian villages in southern Lebanon have garnered widespread attention across media and social networks, praised for their resilience and peaceful resistance as many residents chose to remain in their homes despite the dangers of ongoing hostilities. But on Monday, that resilience took a tragic turn. What had become a symbol of persistence turned into a scene of martyrdom, when a Catholic parish priest was killed in an Israeli strike that hit the border village of Qlayaa in southern Lebanon.

[Father Pierre Al Rahi](#), who had chosen to remain with his parishioners, died alongside the community he refused to

abandon. Pope Leo XIV [expressed sorrow over the death](#) on March 9.

According to local media reports, Hezbollah militants infiltrated the Christian town, turning it into a target for Israeli airstrikes. Residents alerted Rahi, who reportedly went to confront them and ask them to leave the village. The strike that killed him occurred around that time.

In one of his last television interviews before the strike, Rahi said: “We will remain here until death.”

It was not the first time he had expressed such determination. During a previous round of the war in 2024, speaking from the same village of Qlayaa, he said: “We will not leave. We are projects of martyrdom, and we will not abandon our land.”

His death sparked strong reactions among Lebanon’s Christian community, particularly from political and religious leaders. Fingers were pointed at both Israel and Hezbollah. In a statement, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea [confirmed](#) that Hezbollah fighters had infiltrated the village of Qlayaa, triggering Israeli strikes that led to Rahi’s death.

Father Dani Dergham, known for his political activism, [wrote](#) on X that during both the current war and previous rounds of fighting, Rahi had repeatedly warned about the presence of armed men among the peaceful residents of his town.

Meanwhile, a video also circulated online showing Father Hanna Khoury, another priest from Qlayaa, [saying](#) that anyone whose presence or activities in the village are unknown should be considered a threat to the community, reflecting fears among residents about the infiltration of Hezbollah militants into the town.

Rahi was not the only victim of the strikes. Several residents were injured, and earlier, community pages from Christian villages in southern Lebanon also announced the death of a Christian farmer, Sami Youssef Al-Ghafri — from the nearby town of Alma Al-Shaab — who was killed in the shelling.

Christian residents of southern Lebanon have also been calling for the deployment of the Lebanese Army in their towns.

They say they wish to remain on their land, fearing that if they evacuate, Hezbollah could use their villages to launch rockets, exposing them to destruction. Some also express concern that if Israel launches a ground operation, displacement could lead to the loss of their land.



Article published [Romy Haber](#) in digital EWTN News 10th March 26

Romy Haber is a Lebanese journalist and researcher with a degree in journalism and postgraduate studies in international security, specializing in minority affairs in the Middle East.



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 15th March 2026

The Fourth Sunday in Lent – John 9:1.6-9.13-17.34-38

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.



Read

This Sunday's Gospel : THE CURE OF THE MAN BORN BLIND



As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored. His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God; he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet,' replied the man. 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied, 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away. Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied, 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...



The second of the three great Johannine readings about water, light and life (which point to the baptisms of Easter) gives us the splendid account of Jesus bringing light to the blind man in the Temple. It is full of Johannine contrasts and irony. The 'Jews' or the Pharisees think they have the light and knowledge, but the more they abuse the man born blind, the clearer their own darkness and ignorance become. The more they try to thrust the blind man away from Jesus, the more they push him into seeking refuge in him. Much of the colouring of the scene comes from the controversies towards the end of the first century, when the Pharisees were the only branch of Judaism to survive after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The New Testament shows that there was bitter opposition between those Jews who accepted the divine claims for Jesus, and those who rejected them. This is especially clear in the fear of the blind man's parents (recounted in the longer version of Sunday's Gospel) that they would be excluded from the synagogue if they accepted that Jesus' grant of sight was a sign of his divine mission. The doughty and pugnacious man born blind has no such hesitation! **What does it mean that Jesus is the light of the world? How can you bring this light of Jesus to other people?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.



Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit. You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.



Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **HEALING**
(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)



As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

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.



First Reading: *David Anointed King*



1 Samuel 16:1.6-7.10-13

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.' When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him,' but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

The Church chooses Old Testament readings during Lent which prepare us for the coming of Christ. The fourth Sunday brings us to the story of David, with whom the promises of a messianic king originate. As founder of the messianic kingly dynasty, David is the figure of the reality which will be fulfilled by Jesus. Here we have one of the three biblical versions of the discovery of the future king (the others being the story of the young musician at Saul's court and the story of the young warrior slaying the giant Goliath). Here the lesson is that God does not choose as human beings do, though David is obviously an attractive young lad. He would turn out to be a leader of charisma, who could twist anyone round his little finger. God also chose Cain's younger brother Abel, and the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons, Joseph. We constantly have difficulty in accepting that our achievements contribute nothing to God and do not earn his favour. The story of David's dealings with Bathsheba and Uriah her husband, which tells of his capability of adultery and murder, show that he learnt the hard way that we can rely only on God's merciful forgiveness. **Why is David the model of the messianic king?**



Second Reading: *Rise from the Dead and Christ will Shine on You*



Ephesians 5:8-14

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said, 'Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you'.

This reading is obviously chosen to prepare for the gospel reading, in which Jesus brings sight to the blind man. Light is one of the archetypal symbols of hope and encouragement. Without

light we are crippled until, as the psalmist says, with the dawn man goes forth to his work and activities. In the Old Testament God is light who lives 'in inaccessible light'. In the New Testament this attribute of God is transferred to Jesus, for Jesus proclaims that he is the light of the world. In the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, victorious from the conquest over evil, God and the 'Lamb once slain' together constitute the light of the new city of God, so that neither sun nor moon is required. The reading ends with a positive little couplet, possibly an early Christian hymn adopted into the reading, about Christ as the light who by his resurrection bursts through the deepest darkness of all, the darkness of death. Even in the darkness of Lent, preoccupied with the coming Passion of the Lord, we look forward to his liberation and ours in the glory of the resurrection at Easter. **Is Jesus truly the light of the world for me?**

“ We look forward to his liberation and ours in the glory of the resurrection at Easter. ”

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