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Newsletter for the week of 8th March 2026 *Sunday Readings Cycle A* *Weekday Readings Cycle II*

Readings for the 3rd Sunday of Lent: Exodus 17: 3-7; Psalm 95(94) Romans 5: 1-2,5-8; John 4:5-42

Psalm's Response: O that today you would listen to his voice! 'Harden not your hearts.'

Saturday 7th March 5.45pm 1st MASS of the 3rd SUNDAY of LENT

Sunday 8th March 10.30am MASS of the 3rd SUNDAY of LENT

Monday 9th March 9.15am Mass (*Optional: St. Frances of Rome*)

Tuesday 10th March

Wednesday 11th March 11.30am Mass

Thursday 12th March

Friday 13th March 1.00pm Mass (in Hospital Chapel)

Saturday 14th March 10.00am Mass

10.30-11am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 14th March 5.45pm 1st Mass of the 4th Sunday of Lent -

Sunday 15th March 10.30am Mass of the 4th Sunday of Lent

Readings for 4th Sunday of Lent 1 Samuel 16: 1b,6-7, 10-13a; Psalm 23(22); Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

STATIONS of the CROSS & LENT SOUP LUNCH

Lent Fridays: 13th 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

CAFOD LENT FAST APPEAL

Live out the Gospel call to love your neighbour. By doing without & giving what you save, you join in Christ's compassion and help another family put food on the table. You may still leave a gift in the baskets provided, however small, or donate online at cafod.org.uk/envelope or call **0303 303 3030** or text CAFODLENT to **70085** to donate £10.

THANK YOU for YOUR GENEROUS GIVING

Last Sunday's Collection £266.30;

February S/O £524.00;

Cafod Lent Appeal £163.50

SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION

We used to call it *Confession*, so why call it *Reconciliation*? That's because the more important part of the sacrament is not what we do - *making our confession*- our human part – but what the Lord Jesus gives -the divine part- *forgiveness and reconciliation*. Then, if we are coming regularly to Sunday Mass and receiving holy communion, and also if we receive worthily with a humble & contrite heart for our daily faults, we also receive the gift of forgiveness for our daily sins as well as all the other gifts in holy communion. So why come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation? But many Catholics find it fruitful in their spiritual life to come occasionally – especially in the seasons of Lent & Advent- to look back as a struggling disciple over the previous few months with Jesus our Lord and to seek his healing, forgiveness & strengthening to overcome the temptations & weaknesses through gift of *Forgiveness & Reconciliation* in the Sacrament. In St. Edward's it is not viable yet to hold a Service of Reconciliation with the two or three priests available to minister the Sacrament of Reconciliation but we have an invitation from Fr. Tomasz to join them in St. Alban's for their Service of Reconciliation with up to 6 priests for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Holy Week on **Monday 30th March at 7pm**

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

Sat 21st March Afternoon: volunteers' working party clearing church grounds

Sun 22nd March Missionary Sisters' Appeal

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

Get closer to God through Scripture this Lent

Lent is a time when we are invited to deepen our relationship with Scripture, particularly through listening to and engaging with the Word of God.

Pope Leo, in his [Lenten message](#), encourages Catholics to be open to the Word and its transformative potential:

“Every path towards conversion begins by allowing the word of God to touch our hearts and welcoming it with a docile spirit. There is a relationship between the word, our acceptance of it and the transformation it brings about. For this reason, the Lenten journey is a welcome opportunity to heed the voice of the Lord and renew our commitment to following Christ, accompanying him on the road to Jerusalem, where the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection will be fulfilled.”

What is Scripture?

The word Bible comes from the Greek biblos – βιβλος – simply meaning ‘book’ or ‘scroll’. Catholics tend to use the word ‘Scripture’ from the Latin word for writing, emphasising the sacred nature of the writing – more than just a physical book.

The Bible is a collection of 73 books: 46 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament. These texts were inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by multiple authors in three different languages – Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic and over the course of many years – from about 1450 BC to 95 AD.

“The majority of the Bible is made up of literature – such as stories, songs, poetry, personal reflections, histories, and family trees,” “Scripture tells us of how God intervenes in the lives of people, families, towns and nations – all human life is here, all human emotions laid bare. It is their story – it is our story.”

How should we read Scripture?

The length and depth of the Bible may seem overwhelming to some, but St Gregory the Great once said, “Scripture is deep enough for elephants to swim in and shallow enough for lambs to paddle in.” This gives us permission to start small. You don’t need to read a lot of the Bible for it to have an impact. Just a few words or one sentence can transform your heart and your day. Start with a psalm or a parable. Balancing texts from both the Old and New Testament helps us understand the relationship between the two, and the context in which Jesus lives and dies, teaches and saves.

Scripture reading groups are a great way to engage with the Word of God. They can be useful for exploring how the Word speaks to us personally whilst sharing together our reflections on the more challenging parts of the Bible.

Lectio Divina and Visio Divina

There are other helpful tools and techniques that can help us to further our understanding of Scripture.

Lectio Divina is an exercise of reading the same text several times and prayerfully reflecting at each stage over a longer period.

There is also *Visio Divina* where we reflect on a text using biblical art to engage our senses visually.

The impact of Scripture on our lives

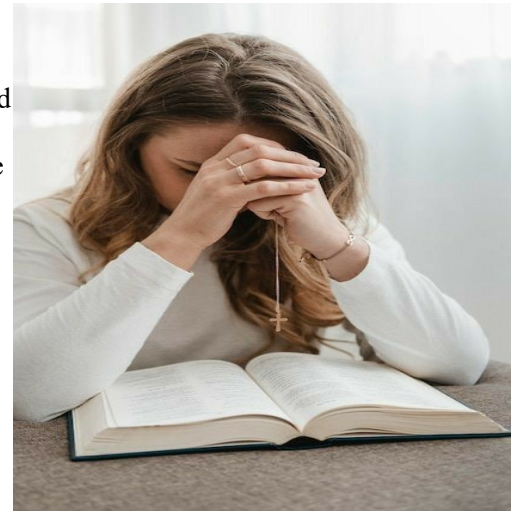
The Bible can help us to discern wisely how to handle big decisions or changes in our life, or it can help us to pray more humbly about our own situations or the needs of others when we allow the Holy Spirit to gently guide us rather than just bringing a list of requests to God.

We can sit with a text from Scripture throughout the day letting its meaning unfold at work, commuting or doing chores, or we can be inspired from a text or story about injustice in the Bible to commit to social action in our neighbourhood.

A final piece of advice: “Start small and make it a daily commitment. A little of the Scriptures every day is better than intense chunks now and then.” The [God Who Speaks website](#) contains more ideas and resources for engaging with Scripture.

The Word of God is a living bread, the food of the soul. Let it sink into your inmost heart and pass into your affections and way of life. Eat plentifully of it and your soul will rejoice.

St Bernard of Clairvaux





Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 8th March 2026
 The Third Sunday in Lent – John 4:5-15.19-26.39-42

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 SAMARITAN AT THE WELL



Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' - Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied, 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you "Give me a drink", you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered, 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied, 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said, 'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come - in fact it is here already - when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah - that is, Christ - is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus, 'I am he.' Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony, so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

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...



In this lively dialogue Jesus almost seems to be teasing the Samaritan woman, deliberately leading her into misunderstanding about what he means by living water or about the conditions of worship. Nothing daunted, she gives as good as she gets, replying with a cheeky series of sarcastic questions, gradually edging nearer to the truth: an open-minded Jew – greater than our father Jacob – a prophet – and finally acknowledging him as the Messiah. With its serious message it is a lovely example of Jesus' willingness to engage with people as they are, and of his openness with women. On these last three Sundays of Lent before Palm Sunday in Cycle A, the Church lays before us the three great symbols of the baptisms which will be celebrated at Easter. This concerns not only those who will be baptised at the Easter Vigil, but all those who are invited to renew our baptismal promise and commitment at Easter. By so doing we enter afresh into the living and nourishing water of God's love which surpasses any food or drink (the teaching given to the Samaritan woman), into the light which enlightens the blind (the Cure of the Man Born Blind) and true life (the Raising of Lazarus).

What does Jesus really mean by 'living water'? What is the real life that God gives us?

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 words for our families are **GOD'S LOVE**
 (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: *Water from the Rock*



Exodus 17:3-7

Tormented by thirst, the people complained against Moses. 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt?' they said. 'Was it so that I should die of thirst, my children too, and my cattle?' Moses appealed to the Lord. 'How am I to deal with this people?' he said. 'A little more and they will stone me!' The Lord said to Moses, 'Take with you some of the elders of Israel and move on to the forefront of the people; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the river, and go. I shall be standing before you there on the rock, at Horeb. You must strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people to drink.' This is what Moses did, in the sight of the elders of Israel. The place was named Massah and Meribah because of the grumbling of the sons of Israel and because they put the Lord to the test by saying, 'Is the Lord with us, or not?'

Throughout Lent the first readings dwell on the history of salvation narrated in the Old Testament; the third Sunday is always about Moses. In this year, Cycle A, the incident at

Massah and Meribah is chosen to pair with the gospel-reading about living water. Christ is the living water of salvation, an image of which is the water God provided for his people when they were tortured by thirst in the desert. It was not just that they could do with a bit of a drink, which we in a well-watered country have the fortune to experience. When you run out of water in the desert you lose all strength, all will to advance, and eventually wilt to death. On two separate occasions in the Old Testament the story of Moses striking the rock is told, and the rabbis held that it was the rock that followed them through the desert. Paul interprets the rock as Christ, who always provides for his people, but in the Old Testament God was not well pleased with most of his people. They continued to rebel and complain about their hardships and to long for 'the leeks and onions' of their slave-life in Egypt. With the same ingratitude we continue to neglect the salvation offered us, absorbed in any passing pleasures we can find. **How do you use water? Is water of life a good image for the gifts of God?**



Second Reading: *Peace with God through Jesus*



Romans 5:1-2.5-8

Through our Lord Jesus Christ by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. This hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man - though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die - but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

Gradually explaining the mystery of salvation in his great Letter to the Romans, Paul has described a world sunk in evil. Then he meditates on Abraham's trust in God's promises, the same unwavering trust which is our only way to salvation,

an unshaken conviction that God will come to our rescue in our shame and our failures. But what is the means by which God fulfils his promise of obliterating the evil which grips the human race? It can only be the obedience of Jesus, shown in his loving and obedient death on the Cross, which outdoes the disobedience of the whole human race, represented in Adam's sin. It is not the gore and suffering which are in themselves salvific - like a price paid for human delinquency - but the total extent of the love shown in unflinching obedience to the Father's will. He did this out of love for the Father, and also out of love for us, for whom he established the Kingship of God on earth. Paul seems to argue that, though in normal terms we were not worth dying for, Christ did die for us, just as in his ministry he did not wait for sinners to repent, but actively and unconditionally called them to himself.

What evils grip the human race today, and what can Jesus' work do to solve them?

“ An unshaken conviction that God will come to our rescue. ”

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