

FIRST READING

2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23

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. The 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 king 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.'"

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 136

O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not!

By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept;
remembering Zion;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung up our harps.

For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.
'Sing to us,' they said,
'one of Zion's songs.'

O how could we sing
the song of the Lord
on alien soil?
If I forget you, Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!

O let my tongue
cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
above all my joys!

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:4-10

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.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ! God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son; everyone who believes in him has eternal life. Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

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 in 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.

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Sunday Mass: 11.00 am.

Weekday Mass: Thur: 9.15am. (Other weekdays: 9.15am at St. Anthony's)

Sacrament of Reconciliation: on request

Holy Family Primary school: 727471 Covenant Books: 735993

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Eternal Life

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." Unfortunately, the phrase *eternal life* is often misinterpreted to mean *life in heaven after you die* - as are *kingdom of God* and its synonym, *kingdom of heaven* - so I think we need to find a better rendering. If eternal life doesn't mean "life after death," what does it mean? Later in John's Gospel, Jesus reduces the phrase simply to *life* or *life to the full*. Near the end of John's account, Jesus makes a particularly fascinating statement in a prayer, and it is as close as we get to a definition: "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). So here, eternal life means knowing, and knowing means an interactive relationship with the only true God and with Jesus Christ. [1]

To know and to be known; to love and to be loved: these are our deepest longings. When we are with someone who knows us, 'the eyes of the other receiving me, delighting in me, enjoying me and looking at me - make me feel like *me* and my best me! When we allow ourselves to be perfectly received, to be totally gazed upon by the One who knows everything and receives everything, we are indestructible. From God's side, the gift is total, once and for all and forever. God's face is turned towards us absolutely. It is we who have to learn to return the gaze. [2] And when we do, we experience eternal life, we 'touch eternity' [3]

"God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved." The only thing that separates us from God is the *thought* that we are separated from God. That's all. It's all in our head. We can't be separated from God. When we surrender to that reality, allow it, enjoy it, draw upon it - that's what it means to be saved; that's what it means to have eternal life' [2]

Adapted: [1] Brian McLaren [2] Richard Rohr [3] Daniel O' Leary

Fourth Sunday in Lent Year B

14th March 2021

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DIARY AND MASS INTENTIONS

for the week beginning Saturday 13th March 2021

Sat 6.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i>	Imelda Salisbury	
Sun 9.30am 11.00am 5.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i> <i>H. Family</i> <i>St. Ant</i>	Mary Teresa Wilson Graham Tyers Private intention	<i>Fourth Sunday in Lent</i> <i>(Laetare)</i>
Mon 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	For our parish	
Tue 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	Winnie Gildea	
Wed 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	Martin Gallagher	<i>Feast: St. Patrick</i>
Thur 9.15am	<i>H. Family</i>	Private Intention	
Fri 1.30pm 6.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i> <i>St. Ant</i>	Funeral Mass: Joan Bleakley	<i>Feast: St. Joseph</i> <i>Stations of the Cross. on zoom</i>
Sat 6.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i>	Margaret Rawcliffe	
Sun 9.30am 11.00am 5.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i> <i>H. Family</i> <i>St. Ant</i>	Joseph Madden For our parish Anthony & Eddie Brown	<i>Fifth Sunday in Lent</i>

Last Weekend: Attendance 35. Offertory £95.00. CAFOD £105.00 Thank you for your generosity.

BIDDING PRAYERS

During his recent visit to Iraq Pope Francis reminded us of the Christian conviction that fraternity is more durable than fratricide, that hope is more powerful than hatred, that peace is more powerful than war. And so we pray for the people of Iraq, and also for ourselves that we may always hold fast to that conviction and answer the Lord's call to us to be peacemakers and bringers of reconciliation.

We continue to pray that our Lenten prayer and reflection, fasting and almsgiving will be occasions for renewal, reconciliation and closer unity with Christ, our Saviour.

We pray for all those in need: those who are sick in mind and body, those suffering from coronavirus, those awaiting treatment for other ailments postponed on account of the pandemic, those in distress on account of family or employment difficulties, those separated from loved ones. We remember in our prayers those of the parish who are sick, and those who care for them, particularly: Harold Slack, Bill O'Shaughnessy, Malaya, Ray Mannion, Bill York, Vera, Lawrence Dunnagan, Trevor Hughes, Claire, Joyce Hilton;

those who have died recently: Joan Bleakley, Patricia Heys, Margaret Rawcliffe;

and those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Richard Kelly, Richard Dell, Winny Carter, Ada Cragg, Frances H Thompson, John Hull, Joseph Ingleson, Eleanor Hodges, Florrie Barnes, Peggy Monk, Jack Garstang, Bernard Simpson, Ethel Baxendale, Cornelius Carig, Clifford Seed, Mary Holland, Elizabeth Marsh, Philip Corbishley, William Ashton. May they rest in peace.

LENT

Stations of the Cross.

We are not able to have the Stations in church but some members of St. Anthony's parish will present them on Zoom every Friday. 'Doors open' at 5.45. Session starts 6.00pm prompt. Meeting ID: 860 7625 5774 Passcode: 068559

Food Bank

For Easter our Food Bank need pasta, pasta sauce, tinned fruit, tomatoes, tuna, milk, cream, eggs. Ideally these are needed by the 2nd week in March. Thank you.

Livestreaming Mass

As well as normal Mass in church we are now able to livestream the 9.30am Mass from St. Anthony's church. Go to the St. Anthony of Padua YouTube page for the link.

First Holy Communions

We're looking at using Zoom or Microsoft Teams to set up preparation for the sacraments of reconciliation and first holy communion. Its not ideal and no preparation can ever be as good as being at Mass each week, gathering with the parish community around the altar of the Lord. Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

Confirmations may also have to be delayed until next year.

Masses received this week: Martin Gallagher, Alice Mathias, Anthony & Eddie Brown, Margaret Rawcliffe, Joseph Madden, family of Joseph Madden, Graham Tyers.

Virtual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Fr John is joining volunteers and Young Leaders from Metanoia Project on a virtual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Over the course of Lent they will run, walk and cycle 3,266 miles, the distance from Preston to Jerusalem. Their aim is to raise funds to support Metanoia Project's work in Preston, and you can sponsor Fr John and find information online at <https://gofund.me/5afc5a0a> or bring money in a marked envelope.

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The Bible in a Year

This free American podcast guides Catholics through the Bible in 365 daily episodes, providing commentary, reflection, and prayer along the way: <https://media.ascensionpress.com/podcast/all-bible-in-a-year-episodes>

THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH:

Pope Francis has designated 2021 a year of St. Joseph. March is St. Joseph's month and this Friday is the Feast of St. Joseph on 19 March. This prayer is suggested by Pope Francis:

Hail Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To you God entrusted his only Son;

in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life.

Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.