

PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

Address: Holy Rosary Presbytery, 2 Grosmont Drive, Billingham, TS23 2EP

Website: www.rcdhnbillingham.co.uk

Telephone: 01642 553 118



4th SUNDAY OF LENT
Week Beginning: 10th March 2024
Prayer Week: 4

www.facebook.com
/rcdhnbillingham

www.diocesehn.org.uk

Sunday 10th March <i>4th Sunday of Lent</i>	10:00am	Parishioners	Holy Rosary
Monday 11th March	10:00am	Private Intention	Holy Rosary
Tuesday 12th March	10.00am	In thanksgiving (moving)	St Joseph's school
Wednesday 13th March	7.00pm	Charles & Teresa Higgins	Holy Rosary
Thursday 14th March	10.00am	George Knox	Holy Rosary
Friday 15th March	10.00am	Special Intention (JS)	St John's
Saturday 16th March <i>5th Sunday of Lent (Vigil)</i>	5.00pm	Leslie Lawrence	St John's
Sunday 17th March <i>5th Sunday of Lent</i>	10:00am	Parishioners	Holy Rosary

Please pray for the sick and everyone who is ill:

Rev. Dan Mckie, Sarah McAllister, Max Simpson, Carol Brownlee, Grace Ollie, Judy Houchen, Peter Smith, Cai Rive, Avril Wordsworth, Lily Ward-Thurlbeck, Rose Wall, Christine Rooney, Brian Kane, Margaret Hitchinson, Helen Webb, Jim Hodgson, Fr Stephen Dye, Judith Sowerby, Kate Williams, Faustina Morgan, Maureen Maddren, Maureen Braithwaite, Baby Cassian, Sheila Allen, May Hutchinson, Sheila Holmes, Michael Bickers, Patrick McAllister. **Lately Dead-** Fr Paddy Kennedy/ Fr Kevin Bolger

MOTHERING SUNDAY

In medieval times this Sunday, "Laetare" or refreshing Sunday, was a day when people returned to their "mother church"- church where they were baptised or to the cathedral (mother church of the diocese). It was a day off for domestic servants to give the chance to "go mothering" with their families. The making of simnel cake was also associated with this middle Sunday of Lent, a day of respite from the Lenten fast.

In early 20thC this day took on a more secular theme, popularised in the USA, of calling it Mother's Day with all the commercial activity which goes with it!

Children's Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.

Any child who would like to take part please give name to Mary after Mass today.

Cafod coffee morning in The Medway 7th April after Mass.

Social event on March 22nd- a few tickets left. Final numbers required by Monday 11th March

GIFT AID

A reminder to all currently signed up to the Gift Aid scheme- Please check you are paying sufficient income tax to cover the amount we claim from HMRC. Please advise us of any change of name or address. Anyone wishing to join the scheme can contact the number below. Forms for anyone wishing to start donating to the Parish by bank standing order are available at the back of church. New planned giving envelopes will be available in March, however if you wish to change over to standing order please make contact ASAP. All contributions made by each method are gratefully received and details are treated with utmost confidentiality. For more information, please contact Caroline Kelly 07899788760

Friendship Group- Pie & Pea Supper. Monday March 25th, 6.30pm
Catholic Club. Tickets (£5) available after Mass

The Northern Cross- MARCH- on sale £1.50p

Statue of Our Lady

For many years the statue was available to parishioners to have in their homes for a week. **MARCH** now on noticeboard. Please sign up.

Stations of the Cross and Exposition- Sunday, Holy Rosary, 4pm

Confessions Saturday, St John's, 10.30-11am

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Is 66: 10-11

**Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.**

THE COLLECT

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

A reading from the second book of 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.

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."'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 136. R. V6

**R) 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. (R)

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.' (R)

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

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

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the 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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 3:16

**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

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We place before you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Ps 121: 3-4

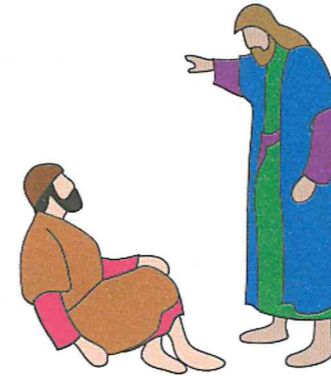
**Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together.
It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,
to praise the name of the Lord.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord.

Our Faith on Sunday

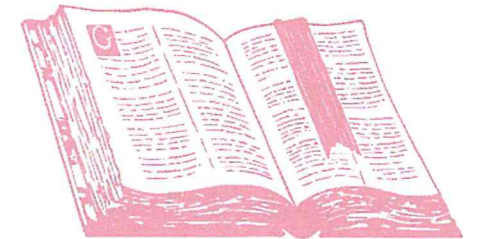
GOSPEL REFLECTION



Today's Gospel is a masterpiece in explaining why Jesus came into the world and what the consequences are, both for those who believe and those who refuse to believe. One phrase I particular gives a clue as

why some will be condemned. It is because they 'prefer darkness to the light'. Because of original sin, there is a tendency in each of us to prefer darkness to light. It is a tendency which causes us to do wrong, even when we don't 'want' to. St Paul himself says that he finds himself doing wrong when he is fully aware that he should not do it. In fact, the root of sin, unless we allow Jesus to uproot it, will constantly lead to do the wrong we would rather not do. And this is precisely why Jesus had to become incarnate and die for us. He knew full well that with our

own strength it is impossible to destroy the roots of sin within us. So, believing in Jesus means, first and foremost, that without him we can do nothing, and especially nothing about our tendency towards evil. The season of Lent is a good time to reflect on this truth and to ask him to give us the strength which only he can give.



POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL
FRATELLI TUTTI
BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL



INTERNATIONAL POWER

170. I would once more observe that "the financial crisis of 2007-08 provided an opportunity to develop a new economy, more attentive to ethical principles, and new ways of regulating speculative financial practices and virtual wealth. But the response to the crisis did not include rethinking the outdated criteria which continue to rule the world".¹⁴⁷ Indeed, it appears that the actual strategies developed worldwide in the wake of the crisis fostered greater individualism, less integration and increased freedom for the truly powerful, who always find a way to escape unscathed.

¹⁴⁷ Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 189; AAS 107 (2015), 922.

The Fire of Love*

TRUE LOVE IS LIKE A PRECIOUS JEWEL

If we are truly devout, we are impervious to the devil's darts and continue to think constantly of the beloved. Our meditation becomes a song of glory and praise. We pass straight from this life to heaven, for being a friend of light rather than darkness, we are lovers of life itself.

To love purely is to be like topaz, a precious jewel that needs no polishing and is found but rarely. True contemplatives are also rare and should not be given positions of ecclesial authority or secular employment. They are like gold in their outstanding love; like the sky in the glory of their heavenly living. They surpass the life of any saint. Their sole purpose is to love and possess the life of God. Leave true contemplatives alone rather than offering them honours, and they will continue to grow brighter and brighter.

*The Fire of Love by Richard Rolle Published by Aeterna Press