

Jeremiah 1:4-5,17-19

In the days of Josiah, the word of the Lord was addressed to me, saying:

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I have appointed you as prophet to the nations.'

'So now brace yourself for action. Stand up and tell them all I command you. Do not be dismayed at their presence, or in their presence I will make you dismayed.'

'I, for my part, today will make you into a fortified city, a pillar of iron, and a wall of bronze to confront all this land: the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests and the country people.'

They will fight against you but shall not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you – it is the Lord who speaks.'

Psalm 70(71):1-6,15,17

My lips will tell of your help.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

In your justice rescue me, free me:
pay heed to me and save me.

Be a rock where I can take refuge,
a mighty stronghold to save me;
for you are my rock, my stronghold.
Free me from the hand of the wicked.

It is you, O Lord, who are my hope,
my trust, O Lord, since my youth.
On you I have leaned from my birth,
from my mother's womb you have been my help.

My lips will tell of your justice
and day by day of your help.

O God, you have taught me from my youth
and I proclaim your wonders still.

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them.

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful.

Next Week: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture readings: Jer 1:4-5, 17-19 / Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6,
15-17 / 1 Cor 12:31—13:13 / Lk 4:21-30

Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge – for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known.

In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord; No one can come to the Father except through me. Alleluia!

Luke 4:21-30

Jesus began to speak in the synagogue: 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely?'

But he replied, 'No doubt you will quote me the saying, "Physician, heal yourself" and tell me, "We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside."

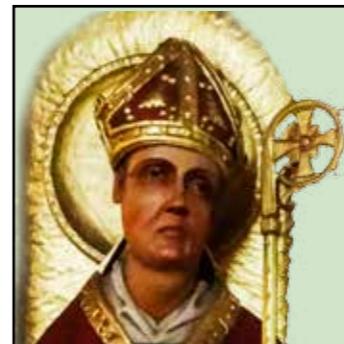
And he went on, 'I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.'

'There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.'

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

The Ordinary of the Mass is found on p200 ff of *Laudate*.

The Gloria, Holy, Memorial Acclamation and Lamb of God used in Ordinary Time are nos 1013 ff in *Laudate*.



St Nicholas Catholic Church, Boldmere

Address: 243 Jockey Rd., Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5US

Telephone: 0121 354 1763 **Email:** stnicholasrc@btinternet.com

Website: www.stnicholasboldmere.co.uk

Parish Blog: www.stnicholasboldmere.wordpress.com

Parish Priest: Fr Allen Morris **E-mail:** frallenmorris@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding: Ann Foulds (0121 355 7892) and Mary Rose (0121 354 4730)

Our Parish is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No. 234216



In the Eucharistic Prayer used last Sunday there is a passage that powerfully picks up the words from Isaiah Jesus claimed as his 'mission statement' in last Sunday's Gospel.

Open our eyes to the needs of our brothers and sisters; inspire in us words and actions to comfort those who labour and are burdened.

Make us serve them truly, after the example of Christ and at his command.

And may your Church stand as a living witness to truth and freedom, to peace and justice, that all people may be raised up to a new hope.

You will recall that Sunday last we spent some time considering our own part in that mission, what we would like to do, what we see 'someone' needs to do - and how we might, somehow, use Lent to advance this desire, this good work. Talking with some students at St Ed-

mund Campion Catholic School the other day they said one of the things they found most impressive about other faiths was how seriously they took times of penance, for example how carefully Muslims keep *Ramadan*. The implication seemed to be we are not so careful about how we keep Lent!

And, if it was, they have a point. We often seem to reduce Lent to giving up booze, or chocolate - probably reasonable things for us to fast from! However giving up these things does not of itself bring us closer to Christ or help us take up more generously our mission as members of his Body, his witnesses to the world.

So let's keep preparing for Lent. Maybe all of us could make extra time for prayer and meditation, or scripture. Two suggestions - though your own will probably be better - come to the Sunday afternoon reflection on *1 Peter*, which focuses on our calling as Christians, or come to the Friday Mass and exposition to spend quality time with the Lord.

Masses Week of 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

S	2	Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Psalter Week 4	1700	Exposition and Sacrament of Confession For the parish
Su	3		1800 0900 1100	William and Alice Williams RIP (Sawbridge) Evelyn Hempenstall Ints (Kennedy)
M	4	St Agatha	1000 * 1500	Clare Banks (O'Gorman) Exposition and Rosary for Vocations
T	5	St Paul Miki & Cmps	1000 *	Nora O'Connor (Roche)
W	6		1000 *	Michael Flanagan Ints (MRA)
Th	7			
F	8		1900	Clare Banks RD (Lawlor) followed by 30 mins exposition
S	9	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Psalter Week 1	1700 1800	Exposition and Sacrament of Confession Luke Gill RIP (Gill)
Su	10		0900 1100	For the parish Alejandro Perez Mejuto RD (Parkes)

Morning/Evening Prayer 20 mins before weekday Masses, *as indicated above* *

Exposition: & Vespers 2nd & 4th Suns of month, 6-7pm; **& Rosary** Mon at 3pm

Reconciliation Sat. 1700-1730 (Exposition until 1740) and by arrangement.

Baptism, Matrimony, Anointing of the Sick: by arrangement.

Nourishing prayer at home: livingeucharist.wordpress.com/

Please pray for sick parishioners including Joan James, Pat Serafinas; Thomas Stevenson; Peter & Olwyn Foster; Lea Burke and Peggy Gallagher. **Please pray for Gerard McGrath** who died recently, and for Bridget Kelly, Rosemary Robinson, Raymond Jones, Luca Atzori, Linda Bradley, Noel Moffitt and Timothy O'Leary and all whose anniversaries of death are at this time: **Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may they rest in peace.**

NB To include names on the list of sick parishioners please complete the form available in the porch and pass to Fr Allen so we meet the requirements of current Data Protection legislation.

For some time now, a subtle weariness seems to have found a place in our communities... And here we need to be careful. It is a temptation that we might call the weariness of hope. This weariness is felt when – as in the Gospel – the sun beats down mercilessly and with such intensity that it becomes impossible to keep walking or even to look ahead. Everything becomes confused. I am not referring here to that peculiar heaviness of heart felt by those who feel 'shattered' at the end of the day, yet manage a serene and grateful smile. I am speaking of that other weariness, which comes from looking ahead once reality 'hits' and calls into question the energy, resources and viability of our mission in this changing and challenging world.

It is a weariness that paralyses. It comes from looking ahead and not knowing how to react to the intense and confusing changes that we as a society are experiencing. These changes seem to call into question not only our ways of speaking and engaging, our attitudes and habits in dealing with reality, but in many cases they call into doubt the very viability of religious life in today's world. And the very speed of these changes can paralyse our options and opinions, while what was meaningful and important in the past can now no longer seem valid.

Sisters, and brothers, the weariness of hope comes from seeing a Church wounded by sin, which so often failed to hear all those cries that echoed the cry of the Master: 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mt 27:46).

And we can get used to living with a weariness of hope before an uncertain and unknown future, and this can pave the

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It is lovely that at the 11 am Mass our music group is being joined by increasing numbers of families. The children are given a Kid's Pack which has in fairly large type the words of all the songs and the parts of the Mass which are sung. This makes it easier for the children to join in the singing and to follow the Mass. Each week the children can collect a Kid's Pack for the following week so they can look at the words of the songs in advance.

All families are very welcome to join. Over the next few weeks the family choir will start to use the two benches in front of the organ. If you are interested, just come and sit with us.

If anyone could provide some accompaniment, even occasionally, that would be great, please have a word with Fr Allen or one of the choir.

Parish

Preparation for Baptism of Infants.

The next preparation programme starts on Sat 2 March from 11-12 noon, in the Benedict Room. Pl see Fr Allen before hand for an application form.

Rosary for Vocations. The Rosary group meets in church on Mondays at 3pm to pray for vocations. All welcome.

Travelling Solo lunch All who 'travel solo in life' for whatever reason are warmly invited to in Benedict Room meet for pub lunch after the 11am Mass this Sunday.

Scripture group Next meeting **7.30pm, Mon 4 Feb**, in the Benedict Rm to read Chaps 9 & 10 of Luke's Gospel. All welcome

World Day of Prayer - an ecumenical event led by Christian women. 1st March, 2.30 at Banners Gate Church, Westwood Rd, or 7.30pm URC Brassington Ave. All are welcome.

Interreligious Dialogue: Archdiocese Commission Study Day On Inter-Faith Matters 2019. Dr. John McDade - Britain Today: No Religion or Many Religions? Thurs 14 March 10.30 – 3.30, Grimshaw Room, St. Chad's Cathedral. Suggested contribution: £15 per head to include hot lunch & speaker's fee. Details in porch.

Modern Slavery is all around us and the Archdiocese is about to launch 'Look Up' a campaign with Catholic anti-slavery charity *The Medaille Trust*. All are invited to come and join the Archbishop for the launch and to mark the feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of trafficking victims, on 8th Feb at 6pm at St Chad's Cathedral, followed by refreshments in the Grimshaw Room. All welcome. RSVP Email: comms@medaille-trust.org.uk

Bishop Walsh Catholic School Sixth Form Open Evening is on Weds 13 Feb 2019 6.30-8.30pm. All are welcome.

Faith In Politics Internship 2019 The Catholic Parliamentary and Public Affairs

Internship Scheme is recruiting at least six recently graduated Catholics to learn from an intensive experience of political and social action in a spiritual context. The scheme will run from September 2019 until July 2020. Internship positions are given with Christian MPs and Peers in Parliament, the Catholic Education Service, CAFOD and the Caritas Social Action Network. All interns also gain from retreats and spiritual guidance, as well as living in a vibrant, young Catholic community in the centre of London. During the year, as part of their overall formation, interns will study for a Postgraduate Certificate in Catholic Social Teaching from St Mary's University, Twickenham. Further information can be found at www.faithinpolitics.org.uk. Applications are open, and the closing date is 28 February 2019. Applications are made by the website. Please direct any questions to stephanie.macgillivray@cbcew.org.uk.

The Birmingham Passion Play 2019:

The Archbishop invites you to support/participate in this event which will run on 16, 17 and 18 April in the City Centre.

The leading actors/actresses will be supplied by professional players from the Saltmine Trust (www.saltminetrust.org.uk), a Christian company keen to recruit volunteers for the community cast, choir, musicians and stewards, etc. There will be meeting for all those who are interested at One Colmore Row, Floor 8, This is one of the new 'glass' buildings near the Cathedral in Snowhill) - 2.30-5.00, SUNDAY 3 FEBRUARY (NB Organisers have changed day of meeting!)



Dads' Get Together

The next meeting includes a reflection from Matteo Bellardi. Meeting on Monday 3rd March at 8pm. So as usual some lively conversation is promised, and some nice food and drink too.



St Joseph's Home, Coleshill, offers Catholic residential care to older people and those living with dementia. Ring 01675 434500 for details.

Can you help? Bishop Walsh Catholic School is looking to recruit members to the Bishop Walsh Association (BWA) able to help raise funds or offer services to support and enhance the teaching and learning of pupils. Could you or your company provide sponsorship or offer work experience opportunities? Please contact t.killworth@bishopwalsh.net if you can help in any way.

Young People's Summer Camp 2019 There is no better place to be this Summer than at Alton Castle for the *Best Camp Ever*. So get your places booked now for Week 1: August 4th-8th or Week 2: August 11th-15th. Experience a life-changing encounter with God in a way like never before through powerful moments of prayer, crazy activities, exciting day trips, challenging talks and so much more... Don't miss out on your place at Summer Camp 2019! For more information email beccy.roseman@kenelmyouthtrust.org.uk

Our Parish Book Clubs

(A) **The Daytime Group** 1030 on Weds 27 Feb to discuss *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again* by Rachel Held Evans. One review: The best endorsement I can give the book is that before I was even halfway through, I told my teenagers I wanted to read it with them. This is the Jesus and the Scriptures I want them to love. This is a brilliant, beautiful offering'. (B) **The Night Time Club** 8pm on Mar 11 to discuss *A Time to Keep* by George Mackay Brown - a slim volume of short stories of life on Orkney.

All are welcome - just read the book and come along to chat about it, and to enjoy good company and 'refreshments'. Meet in the parish house.

For the sick and those who care for them

A simple and brief monthly service of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with prayer for the sick and for carers, and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Followed by light lunch.

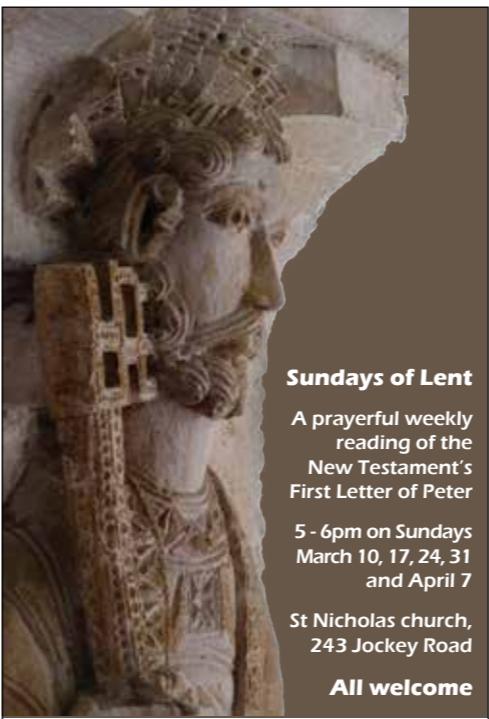
11am on First Fridays (usually). Next service is March 1st

Other

A Lifeline for Marriages Is your marriage stressed, unloving, cold? Do you want to improve your communication? Have you separated, divorced, or are you thinking of doing so? Do you want to try again? The Retrouvaille programme may be just what you need! Info from 0788 729 6983 or www.retrouvaille.org.uk

Thomas Merton. Catholic Times author Chris McDonnell will speak on Merton - monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet, social activist and scholar of comparative religion. Sun 24 Feb, St Mary's Parish Centre, Vivian Rd, Harborne B17 0DN. 1.30pm tea, 2.00 talk, Q&A, discussion. All welcome. Contact local ACTA at mjriordan@hotmail.co.uk

Sutton Street Pastors need help. Details on the noticeboard of how they help youngsters at risk. Interested? Contact Frank Cole at suttonpastors@gmail.com or text 07964 090954.



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way for a grey pragmatism to lodge in the heart of our communities. Everything apparently goes on as usual, but in reality, faith is crumbling and failing. Communities and priests disappointed by a reality that we do not understand or that we think has no room for our message, we can open the door to one of the worst heresies possible in our time: the notion that the Lord and our communities have nothing to say or contribute in the new world now being born. What once arose to be the salt and light for the world ends up stale and worn.

Weariness from the journey can happen; it can make itself felt. Like it or not, we do well to have the same courage as the Master, and to say, 'Give me a drink'. As was the case with the Samaritan woman and perhaps with each one of us, we want to quench our thirst not with any water but with the 'spring of water welling up to eternal life' (Jn 4:14). Like the Samaritan woman who for years had been carrying the empty pitchers of failed loves, we know that not just any word can help us regain energy and prophecy in our mission. Not just any novelty, however alluring it may seem, can quench our thirst. We know, as she did, that neither knowledge of religion nor upholding options and traditions past or novelties present, always makes us fruitful and passionate 'worshippers in spirit and truth' (Jn 4:23).

The Lord says, 'Give me a drink', he asks us to say those same words. As we say them, let us open the door and let our wearied hope return without fear to the deep well of our first love, when Jesus passed our way, gazed at us with mercy, and he chose us and asked us to follow him. To say those words, let us revive the

memory of that moment when his eyes met ours, the moment when he made us realize that he loved us, that he loved me, not only personally but also as a community. To be able to say 'give me a drink' means retracing our steps and, in creative fidelity, listening to how the Spirit inspired no specific works, pastoral plans or structures, but instead, through any number of 'saints next door'... he gave life and fresh breath to a particular moment of history when all hope and dignity seemed to be stifled and crushed.

'Give me a drink' means finding the courage to be purified and to recapture the (call to life in Christ).

'Give me a drink' means recognizing that we need the Spirit to make us women and men mindful of an encounter and of a passage, the salvific passage of God. And trusting that, as he did yesterday, he will still do tomorrow: 'Going to the roots helps us without a doubt to live in the present without fear. We need to live without fear, responding to life with the passion of being engaged with history, immersed in things, and with the passion of lovers.

A wearied hope will be healed and will enjoy that 'particular tiredness of heart' when it is unafraid to return to the place of its first love and to find, in the peripheries and challenges before us today, the same song, the same gaze that inspired the song and the gaze of those who have gone before us. In this way, we will avoid the danger of starting with ourselves; we will abandon a wearisome self-pity in order to meet Christ's gaze as he continues today to seek us, to call us and to invite us to the mission, as he did in that first meeting, that meeting of our first love.

Pope Francis, Panama, 2019



Pray with Pope Francis

The Pope's prayer intention for February is for a generous welcome of the victims of human trafficking, of enforced prostitution, and of violence.

To find the Pope's other current prayer intentions please visit <http://www.apostleshipofprayer.org/>

God's cry to Cain, found in the first pages of the Bible – Where is your brother?

– challenges us to examine seriously the various ways in which society tolerates, and encourages, particularly with regard to the sex trade, the exploitation of vulnerable men, women and children.

Pope Francis

- Notice who you in fact consider to be your brother, your sister...
- Who and where, in our society, do you see or know that people are exploited?
- Where do you see or know that victims of trafficking, enforced prostitution and violence are treated with dignity as brothers and sisters within our human family