

ARCH Group's aim: "To show our love for God and You"

Weekly Notices
25th February 2024
Second Sunday of Lent

Today's Collect

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today's Post Communion Prayer

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Next Week's Services: Sunday 3rd March 2024

8.30 am	Rous Lench	Holy Communion*
9.30 am	Harvington	Morning Service
11.00 am	Church Lench	Holy Communion+
6.00 pm	Harvington	Taizé

Friday 1st March: World Day of Prayer

Service at St James', Harvington, at 6.00 pm; tea and cake from 5.30 pm

Theme: 'I beg you bear one another in love'

organised by the Christian Women of Palestine

***Do join us for the service and pray on this topic and
for Palestinian communities***

For Prayer

Lord, there is so much going on in our world that we don't understand: wars and rumours of wars, famine, natural disasters, corrupt leaders, injustice, global warming. Help us to hold on to the fact that you are in control; that, ultimately, you are God. We bring specific areas of concern to you now: Gaza and Israel, Ukraine and Russia..... We pray for your loving hand to be on the people who are suffering. We ask you to bring them comfort and security. Lord, we pray for peace.

Lord, even when we don't understand,

Help us to keep on trusting you.

Lord, there is so much going on in our neighbourhood that we don't understand: strikes and unrest; hospital waiting lists that seem endless; ambulances stuck outside hospitals; schools with crumbling walls and ceilings. Lord, it seems as if there is never any contentment and very little joy, and when we turn to you, we hear you speaking of suffering and rejection. As followers of Jesus, you explain that our true joy comes only from denying ourselves. Sometimes it all seems so confusing and topsy-turvy. Sometimes following you is hard and we admit that there are times when we just do not understand. Yet you love us through all our turmoil. You care for us deeply and long for us to see things from your perspective. Give us insight and wisdom, we pray, especially when (*add local concerns here*)

Lord, even when we don't understand,

Help us to keep on trusting you.

Lord, there is so much going on within us that we don't always understand. We fall sick: some people are cured and some are not, and there often doesn't seem to be any explanation as to why. We pray now for those amongst us who are suffering in any way. We remember those who are sad and sorrowful; those who are lonely, anxious or depressed. We pray for those waiting for treatment or a diagnosis. We pray for those whose faith is tested by their troubles; give them courage to face their situations. Show us how to be empathisers, how to be good listeners, how to be there when we are needed. But, most of all, we pray for your comfort and love to be felt by all who need your touch today.

Lord, even when we don't understand,

Help us to keep on trusting you.

This Week's First Reading: *Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16*

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

¹⁵God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'

This Week's Psalm: *Psalms 22:23-31*

23 Praise the Lord, you that fear him; O seed of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, O seed of Israel.

24 For he has not despised nor abhorred the suffering of the poor; neither has he hidden his face from them; but when they cried to him he heard them.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; I will perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you.

26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever.

Psalm 22:23-31 continued

- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.
- 28 For the kingdom is the Lord's and he rules over the nations.
- 29 To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.
- 30 Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,
- 31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

This Week's Second Reading: *Romans 4:13-25*

¹³The promise that Abraham would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'). Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the

Romans 4:13-25 continued

father of many nations,' according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²²Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' ²³Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him,' were written not for his sake alone, ²⁴but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

This Week's Gospel Reading: *Mark 8:31-38*

³¹Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my

Mark 8:31-38 continued

sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?

³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Next Week's First Reading: *Exodus 20:1-17*

¹Then God spoke all these words: ²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹²Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:1-17 continued

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Next Week's Psalm: *Psalm 19:7-14*

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

8 The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure and gives light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, dripping from the honeycomb.

11 By them also is your servant taught and in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can tell how often they offend? O cleanse me from my secret faults!

13 Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins lest they get dominion over me; so shall I be undefiled, and innocent of great offence.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Next Week's Second Reading: *1 Corinthians 1:18-25*

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.' ²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 continued

is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Next Week's Gospel Reading: *John 2:13-22*

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' ¹⁹Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' ²⁰They then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.