

The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

St Benedict's Parish Newsletter
Stratton-on-the-Fosse
4 July 2021

AS WE HAVE accompanied Jesus' disciples in St Mark's Gospel we have witnessed him calm a storm at sea and raise a twelve-year old girl from the dead in Galilee. But as soon as he returns to his home town of Nazareth, there is a sharp change of mood. Mark tells us, 'He was not able to perform any mighty deed there.' This is strange. The listeners in the synagogue are impressed by his words and miracles, but they close their hearts to his identity as God's Son. For them, Jesus is simply one of us, another tradesman, one of our relations.

Jesus is in Israel. The name Israel means 'God contends' and Jacob, who was given the name Israel, wrestled with God in the extraordinary incident we find in Genesis 32: 23-33. God's relationship with his people has always been a struggle. We realise that we too are living in the midst of a world that is struggling with God. For healing and new life, we need to accept God's grace in the face of the insults and hardships we encounter as we follow Jesus. This is the message of our reading from St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Jesus will work no mighty deeds in our lives unless we abandon ourselves to him in faith. 'Like the eyes of a servant on the hand of her mistress, so our eyes are on the Lord our God till he show us his mercy' (Psalm 122).

COVID and Mass: We have been informed that someone who attended the 11.00 a.m. Mass on Sunday has been tested positive for COVID. We have reviewed the situation and have decided that there is no reason to cancel Mass as a result. They came in late and sat on a pew where no-one else was sitting. Everybody wore masks, strict social distancing was observed and the Abbey Church was well ventilated, so there is little risk of transmission.

However, we thought it was only right that you should be informed in case you felt you needed to stay away. We are also reminding people that:

- you must inform us if you test positive for COVID so that we can carry out a risk assessment
- you should use the track and trace app by using the NHS QR code on entry
- masks **MUST** be worn and social distancing observed.

Stewards will continue to ensure strict safety guidelines are adhered to, ensuring that our services are safe.

Times for All Masses and Confessions:

Masses:

- Saturdays: 4.30 p.m. in the Abbey Church
- Sundays: 11 a.m. in the Abbey Church
- Monday to Saturday (inclusive): 8.35 a.m. in the Abbey Church

Confessions are heard from 4.00 to 4.30 p.m. on Saturdays and from 10.30 to 11.00 a.m. on Sundays in the Abbey Church.

Mass has resumed at the Holy Ghost on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 09.45 a.m.

Confessions are heard in the Holy Ghost after Mass on Saturdays.

Please remember that the wearing of facemasks and the rules for social distancing will remain in place for all those attending Mass and other services.

The **Abbey Church** is open for prayer from 8.30 a.m until 6.30 p.m. every day. Please continue to wear a facemask, use the hand sanitisers and observe social distancing regulations.

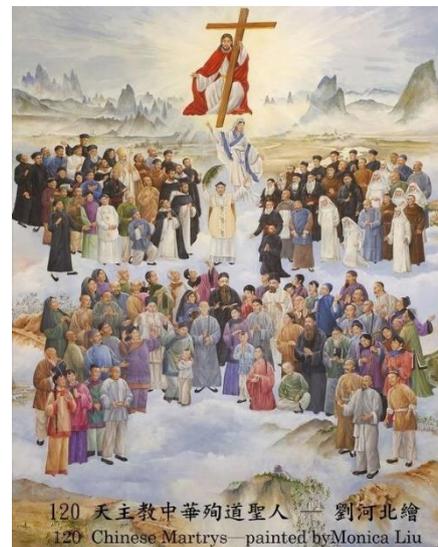
Sea Sunday: Next Sunday, the Fifteenth in Ordinary Time, is Sea Sunday, for which there will be a second collection. The second Sunday in July is when we come together across the globe to celebrate the role seafarers play in our daily lives. We give thanks and offer our prayers for the hardships they face and the sacrifices they have been forced to endure in the Covid lockdowns.



Congratulations to Tom and Aga Price on the birth of their daughter Rosalia.

Martyrology: Monday 5 July is the Optional Memoria of St Anthony Zaccaria (1502-39). Anthony was a doctor of medicine when, aged 26, he was ordained priest and founded the Barnabite Order. These priests were bound by vows to regenerate and revive the love of divine worship and a properly Christian way of life by frequent preaching and the faithful ministry of the sacraments. He died aged 37. His order, with its simple objectives, is an example of the revival of Christian life in Italy in times of notorious abuses.

Friday 9 July is the Optional Memoria of St Augustine Zhao Rong and his companions. This feast also celebrates the 119 martyrs who died between 1648 and 1930. Some were European missionaries and many were native Chinese. Chi Zhuzi, who was 18 years old, cried out to those who had cut off his right arm and were preparing to flay him alive: 'Every piece of my flesh, every drop of my blood will tell you that I am a Christian.' Today there are estimated to be about 44 million Christians in the country. But according to Freedom House, a US human rights group, this number is closer to 100 million if those belonging to underground or house churches are included. Of these, about 60 to 80 million are Protestant and 12 million Catholic.



Readings for the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

First reading

These rebels shall know that there is a prophet among them

The spirit came into me and made me stand up, and I heard the Lord speaking to me. He said, 'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebels who have turned against me. Till now they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me. The sons are defiant and

obstinate; I am sending you to them, to say, "The Lord says this." Whether they listen or not, this set of rebels shall know there is a prophet among them' (Ezekiel 2:2-5).

Second reading

The Lord's power is at its best in weakness

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me from getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.' So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

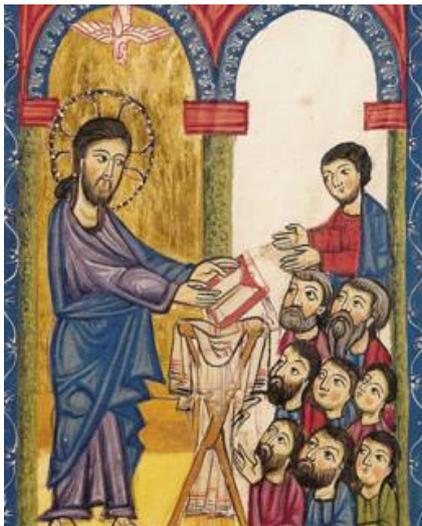
Gospel

Motivation: *Where do you find God? Perhaps in prayer, the Eucharist, the Sacraments, nature, friendships, or simply in beautiful moments. You can also find God in Scripture; God is the Word. The Spirit gives life to the precious printed words of your Bible. The Word is alive and active, and can pierce the depths of your heart, sharper than anything. God also makes his home in you, in the most intimate and secret place that is really you. He knows you. He loves you.*

In this privileged moment of prayer, when we dive into the Word, I invite you to allow the Lord to disarm you. Allow the walls that you sometimes build inside to protect yourself to disintegrate by the action of the Word. Do not resist him.

In the Gospel, Jesus visits the synagogue in his hometown. In this Lectio, the Lord visits his temple. He knocks at the door of your heart. Today, he wants to speak to you, to heal you, to give you faith. Will you welcome him?

'A prophet is only despised in his own country'



Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, 'Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?' And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house'; and he could work no miracle there, though he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith (Mark 6:1-6).