

# Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 1



## JESUS' INNER EMOTIONAL SELF

(JOHN 12:20-33)

*"Agony in the Garden", a wall-painting from about the year 1500, in the Church of St Mary, Elsinore, Denmark*

When he is told that "some Greeks", who have come to Jerusalem for the festival of Passover, want to see him, Jesus tells his disciples that "the hour" for him to be glorified has arrived. The period of his revealing his glory, which began with the first sign at Cana and ended with the final one of the raising of Lazarus, is over, and his passion is about to begin.

One of the features of the Fourth Gospel (John) is that some of the most dramatic scenes which we encounter in the three Synoptic Gospels are missing: these include the testing of Jesus in the wilderness (the temptations) and the agony in the garden (better expressed as the struggle in Gethsemane). However, we find the components of these episodes scattered in the Johannine account. The scenes mentioned present Jesus struggling with what it means to be the Son of God and to be faithful to his mission. They show Jesus in a very human light: in our Gospel reading today, Jesus realises that his hour, the complex events of his passion and exaltation on the cross, has arrived and the possibility of praying to be spared it comes to his mind. However, he overcomes this understandable reaction and accepts the Father's will, since this is the purpose of his coming. The voice from heaven then vindicates Jesus' choice. There is a tendency sometimes to play down the human aspect of Jesus, to eliminate any hesitation or struggle on his part: although the Fourth Gospel views the crucifixion as the lifting up of Jesus in glory, this passage reminds us of the enduring dark nature of the cross. ■

## REFLECT

It is difficult to keep in balance the two natures of Jesus, the divine and human aspects of his being. The Gospel traditions about his being tested and his final test before the passion, described by the Synoptics in the Gethsemane scene and hinted at in our Gospel reading today from John, suggest that we should not forget or play down Jesus' human nature. The Gospel of John shows Jesus as being well aware of his divine nature and relationship with the Father, but the temptation to take shortcuts to fulfil his destiny as the Messiah or to avoid the supreme test of the passion altogether is still there, albeit in a much more subtle, but no less real, form.

If it is true, as the letter to the Hebrews tells us, that Jesus "has been put to the test in exactly the same way as ourselves, apart from sin", then we should not be afraid to imagine Jesus as being moved in much the same way as we would be in his shoes: for example, the Fourth Gospel tells us that Jesus is "troubled" when confronted with death. If Jesus is to be our model, then we need to know that he understands our human condition from his own experience and can sympathise with us in our difficulties and fears. ■

## DO

Take the crucifix in your hands: reflect on the figure on the cross and on the human nature of Jesus.



## LEARN

The Gospel of John does not contain some dramatic scenes which we find in the Synoptic Gospels:

These include the temptations of Jesus, the agony in the garden, and the trial before the Sanhedrin.

The agony in the garden is more accurately understood as the struggle in Gethsemane of Jesus to remain faithful to the ultimate act of obedience to his mission from the Father.

## SAY

**Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears.**  
(Hebrews 5:7)

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Give me justice, O God,  
and plead my cause against a nation that is  
faithless.  
From the deceitful and cunning rescue me,  
for you, O God, are my strength.

**COLLECT**

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,  
may we walk eagerly in that same charity  
with which, out of love for the world,  
your Son handed himself over to death.  
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.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.  
See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who  
speaks – when I will make a new covenant  
with the House of Israel and the House of  
Judah, but not a covenant like the one I made  
with their ancestors on the day I took them  
by the hand to bring them out of the land of  
Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so  
I had to show them who was master. It is the  
Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I  
will make with the House of Israel when those  
days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep  
within them I will plant my Law, writing it on  
their hearts. Then I will be their God and they  
shall be my people. There will be no further  
need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour,  
or brother to say to brother, "Learn to know  
the Lord!" No, they will all know me, the least  
no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who  
speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and  
never call their sin to mind.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 50

Response:  
A pure heart create for me, O God.

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.  
In your compassion blot out my offence.  
O wash me more and more from my guilt  
and cleanse me from my sin. (R.)
2. A pure heart create for me, O God,  
put a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. (R.)
3. Give me again the joy of your help;  
with a spirit of fervour sustain me,  
that I may teach transgressors your ways  
and sinners may return to you. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Hebrews 5:7-9

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.  
During his life on earth, Christ offered up  
prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears,  
to the one who had the power to save him  
out of death, and he submitted so humbly  
that his prayer was heard. Although he was  
Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but  
having been made perfect, he became for all  
who obey him the source of eternal salvation.  
The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of  
God!  
If a man serves me, says the Lord, he must  
follow me  
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.  
Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of  
God!

**GOSPEL** John 12:20-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
John.  
Among those who went up to worship  
at the festival were some Greeks. These  
approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida  
in Galilee, and put this request to him, "Sir,  
we should like to see Jesus." Philip went to  
tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together  
went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:  
"Now the hour has come  
for the Son of Man to be glorified.  
I tell you, most solemnly,  
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground  
and dies,  
it remains only a single grain;  
but if it dies,  
it yields a rich harvest.  
Anyone who loves his life loses it;  
anyone who hates his life in this world  
will keep it for the eternal life.  
If a man serves me, he must follow me,  
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.  
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour  
him.  
Now my soul is troubled.  
What shall I say:  
Father, save me from this hour?  
But it was for this very reason that I have  
come to this hour.  
Father, glorify your name!"  
A voice came from heaven, "I have glorified  
it, and I will glorify it again."  
People standing by, who heard this, said  
it was a clap of thunder; others said, "It was  
an angel speaking to him." Jesus answered,  
"It was not for my sake that this voice came,  
but for yours.  
"Now sentence is being passed on this  
world;  
now the prince of this world is to be  
overthrown.  
And when I am lifted up from the earth,  
I shall draw all men to myself."

By these words he indicated the kind of death  
he would die.  
The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
*(all bow during the next two lines)*  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Hear us, almighty God,  
and, having instilled in your servants  
the teachings of the Christian faith,  
graciously purify them  
by the working of this sacrifice.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of  
wheat  
falls to the ground and dies, it remains a  
single grain.  
But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We pray, almighty God,  
that we may always be counted among the  
members of Christ,  
in whose Body and Blood we have  
communion.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Many people seem to think that true religion  
is defined by "giving up things". In a sense it  
is far easier to deny one's body than quietly  
and soberly to surrender your whole self for  
God's possessing. In Lent, how much easier  
to give up wine or chocolate than seriously to  
tackle our impatience. A friend of mine who  
was prepared to fast most rigorously in Lent  
was horrified when I suggested daily Mass  
and half an hour's prayer instead.

Sister Wendy Beckett

# Our Lady & St Edmund of Abingdon

## 1 Radley Rd, Abingdon on Thames, Oxon, OX14 3PL

We are a *LiveSimply* parish aiming to live Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity with the Poor

Parish Priest: Fr. Jamie McGrath Tel: 01235 520375  
Parish Secretary: Lisa Paterson Tel: 01235 520375  
Office Hours: 10.30am-12.30pm Tuesday to Friday  
Office Email: abingdon@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

We live stream all services

Safeguarding Team: Tel. 07572 935 230  
Visits at JR Hospital: Priest/Chaplain 01865 221732  
Visits and Help: Society of Vincent de Paul Group, contact via Parish Office  
Parish Website: [www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk)  
Primary School: St. Edmund's School, Radley Road, Abingdon, OX14 3PP Tel 521558



Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Reg. Charity No 246871

[www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

### PRIVATE PRAYER

We are blessed that the church can be open, but for **private prayer only**, on the following days and times:

- ✠ **Tuesdays: 12pm to 1pm**
- ✠ **Fridays: 12pm to 1pm**

### MASS BOOKINGS:

On **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March** you can book for Masses from **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March to Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**. This includes the services for Holy Week (see times below), but **NOT** Easter Sunday.

**PLEASE** remember to give as many dates and times when you could attend, and book on the Monday – otherwise you may be disappointed. Also be clear on the number of people you are booking for and let us know if you would like to attend more than one Mass during the week.

### HOLY WEEK SERVICES

*(Physical attendance through our booking system only)*

- ✠ **Palm Sunday (28th March): 10.15am & 6.30pm**
- ✠ **Maundy Thursday (1st April):** Mass of the Lord's Supper **7pm**
- ✠ **Good Friday (2nd April):** Passion of the Lord **3pm**
- ✠ **Easter Vigil Saturday (3rd April): 8pm**
- ✠ **Easter Sunday (4th April): 8.45am, 10.15am and 12 noon**

## HOW TO BOOK FOR MASS

### No Internet Access?

Phone **07395 946827** EACH MONDAY between 10am and 11am **ONLY** to book a place for the **FOLLOWING** week

### Have Internet Access?

**DON'T** phone. Instead, email: [contact@ourladyandstedmund.org.uk](mailto:contact@ourladyandstedmund.org.uk) EACH MONDAY, to book a place for the **FOLLOWING** week

### CONFESSIONS

By appointment only for now. Please contact the **parish office** to book an appointment.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent (Year B)

**Attendance through booking system only, but also available on our live stream**

#### Sunday 21 March

- 10.15am Mass (Betty Hemmings, RIP – 5<sup>th</sup> anniv.)
- 2.00pm Mass in Polish
- 6.30pm Mass (The Logan family, RIP)

#### Monday 22 March

- 9am Mass (Joe Murphy, RIP)

#### Tuesday 23 March

NO Mass See: [www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk/english-martyrs-vale-of-white-horse](http://www.ourladyandstedmund.org.uk/english-martyrs-vale-of-white-horse) for other masses

#### Wednesday 24 March

- 7pm Mass (Pauline Bicker, RIP)

#### Thursday 25 March *The Annunciation of the Lord*

- 9.30am Mass (Michael Carden, RIP)

#### Friday 26 March

- 7pm Mass (Lisa Paterson special intentions - birthday)

#### Saturday 27 March

- 12pm Mass (Fr Jamie, intentions)



### SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot today receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



### CONTACTING US BY PHONE

We apologise if you had difficulty in contacting us by phone over the last few days. We had a problem with the phone, which should now have been resolved.

### 'BLUE BOXES'

As the church is still currently not accessible in the normal way, we are going to endeavour to deliver the boxes that cannot be personally picked up when attending Mass. This will take place over the next several weeks. Please note that some monthly boxes may include weekly envelopes that you do not normally receive. This is due to a change in our supplier's collation routines. Please discard any unwanted envelopes.



### CHRISM MASS

This will take place at the Cathedral in Portsmouth on **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March at 11am**. Attendance in person is not possible, but you are encouraged to follow the Mass on live stream if you can:

[www.churchservices.tv/portsmouthcathedral](http://www.churchservices.tv/portsmouthcathedral)



### PANDEMIC NATIONAL DAY OF REFLECTION

The Prime Minister has asked for a National Day of Reflection on the first anniversary of the first lockdown next **Tuesday 23rd March**. The Bishop's Conference have issued a Statement, which you can read on the News page of our website. **Our Church is open for private prayer from 12 pm to 1pm.**

### THANK YOU

*TrinityLearning* say a huge thank you to all those who responded to their appeal for unused tablets to help children learn at home during the current lockdown and all those who volunteered to help with the appeal. Your generous donations of devices, money and time meant they were able to donate 17 laptops, tablets, and Chromebooks to local schools! These have not only been invaluable in supporting children's learning from home, but will also help to ensure children are able to catch up and keep up with work as schools return.

### LENTEN REFLECTIONS

There is still time for you to join our parish *2021 Lenten 'Hope and Healing' Prayer and Reflections* by zoom.

The course will continue every Thursday throughout Lent and will include a variety of reflections, scripture, Sycamore films, and the opportunity for prayer. Everyone is welcome to join all or any of the sessions and people can choose whether to participate in various discussions and sharing or can simply listen and reflect if they prefer.

*Hope and Healing* will be hosted by the parish RCIA team and anyone interested should contact Pauline on [pehanley@hotmail.com](mailto:pehanley@hotmail.com) or call 07506 753085 to register for the zoom link.

### FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

At present it is not possible to prepare our children for their First Holy Communion and this may not be possible until 2022. However we would like to have an idea of how many children will wish to be prepared once we can get started again. To give us an indication, could you please tell us the name and age of your child/children and give us a contact phone and email address. We can then compile a list and be able to contact you with news about when we can re-start.

Please send this information to Errol Midwinter Phone 01235 522679 or email [errolm@btinternet.com](mailto:errolm@btinternet.com)

### LENTEN PROJECTS

Please do remember the two charities which we are supporting - **5<sup>th</sup> Gospel Christians**, a charity that works to support Christians in the Middle East, particularly the Iraqi Christian refugees currently in Jordan, and **BeSpace**, a small Oxfordshire based charity that works to provide reflective, interactive prayer spaces in all primary and secondary schools in Oxfordshire.

There will then be an opportunity at the end of Lent (information to be given later) to make your donation online *or* using the gift aid pink envelope if you have one, *or* simply putting it in any envelope clearly marked 'Lenten Projects'.

