

Saints Days this Week... 13th-18th January

MONDAY - *St Hilary* Was born at the beginning of the 4th Century. He was elected Bishop of Poitiers in 350. He fought strongly against Arianism (which taught that Jesus was subordinate to the Father) and as a consequence was exiled by Emperor Constantine. His works are full of wisdom & learning. He died in 367 & was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1851

FRIDAY – *St Anthony* Was born in upper Egypt in 251. He is renowned as the father of monasticism. Anthony was the first Christian to lead an austere life of prayer and fasting in the solitude of the desert. His biography, written by Saint Athanasius, became a classic text for Western monasticism. Anthony's wisdom was collected into sayings of the Desert Fathers. To a fellow abbot, he gave the advise: “Don't trust in your own righteousness, practice moderation in food and talk; and don't worry about things done in the past.” Anthony died in 356 and was buried in a secret location by his fellow hermits.

PARISH PRAYER GROUPS AND PRAYER TIMES

Monday Exposition & Rosary ~ St Wilfrid's, 7.30–8.30pm

St Bede's Prayer Group ~ Meets in church, Tuesday 7.30–9.00pm

Mother's Prayers ~ Coming together in each other's homes to pray for families. Further details from the Parish 01606 42440

Divine Mercy Prayer Group ~ Praying for the sick & dying.

Morning Prayer ~ Is prayed each weekday 9.05am, prior to 9.30am Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration ~ Sunday at St Wilfrid's 4.15 – 5.15pm

Exposition & Reconciliation ~ Saturday at St Wilfrid's 11.00-11.50am

Web Sites ~

Parish: www.stjohnvianney.co.uk

Catholic Church in England & Wales: www.catholicnews.org.uk

Prayer Site: www.pray-as-you-go.org

Scripture Reflection: www.wednesdayword.org

In this new year, as we begin to read the Gospel of Matthew, prepare, by going to: godwhospeaks.uk

Preparing to hear God's word...

Next Sunday's Readings: *Second Sunday Year A* 19th January 2020

“Look, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”



The season of Christmas has finished and we now enter into Ordinary Time. Every year, on this Sunday, John's Gospel is read. The purpose of this is to place Ordinary Time in continuity with the birth and manifestation of the Lord, celebrated at Epiphany and at the Lord's baptism. So before we begin following Matthew's Gospel (Yr A), we hear today of the witness given to Jesus by John the Baptist. Jesus is revealed as the 'Chosen One of God' who will take away the sin of the world. This theme is picked up by Isaiah in the **First Reading** when we hear of the 'Suffering Servant' who will become a 'light to all nations'.

Psalm 39: *Here I am Lord! I come to do your will*

In the **Second Reading** we begin a series of seven readings from the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians. Written around 55AD, Corinth was a thriving Greek city & sea port. Paul addresses the many problems in the young church & seeks to answer questions. Today we hear the very beginning of his Letter (1 Cor. 1: 1-3) and Paul reminds the people that they are all called to holiness – to copy the example of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 49: 3. 5-6

The Lord said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified”; I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord, my God was my strength. And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to him: “It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

As I settle to pray, I ask the Lord that I may open to His word today.

Today we hear the Second of four songs found in Isaiah (chapters 40 – 55) telling of a mysterious figure - *the Lord's Servant or Suffering Servant* - who, through following the Lord's way, will suffer and die, and as a consequence, will bring life to all. Who Isaiah envisaged this figure to be, we do not know, but today, as Christians, we clearly understand the prophecy to be fulfilled in Christ. In today's passage we learn that the mission of the Servant is not just to bring life to Israel, but to be a light to all nations.

In the same movement in which the Son delivers himself, dedicates himself, & sacrifices himself, the Father receives, transfigures, & glorifies him. Thus many concepts which have for us a negative ring are seen to be in a process of transfiguration. To realize our being we have to become a sacrifice with Jesus, a son in the Son. A sacrifice is a being that is not only offered but accepted, that has entered into the sphere of the divine. Self-renunciation, poverty, abandonment, dying to self, are simply movements towards God.

In them we actualise our humanness & transcendence.

Sr. Ruth Burrows

John 1: 29-34

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, “Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.” John also declared, “I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit.' Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.”

I come to my place of prayer. I gently become aware of God's presence. When I am ready, I slowly read and re-read the Gospel.

At every Mass, as the priest elevates the host, we hear the words: “*Look, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world*”. What do they mean to us? There is a freshness in today's gospel as the Baptist gazes on Jesus and proclaims the words for first time. In the Old Testament the lamb is the victim sacrificed to take away sin. The Passover lamb was also a symbol of liberation and of communion with God, since it was at the Passover that Israel became God's people. Note also:

How Jesus *approaches* John. Jesus always makes the first move - for God's goodness always precedes our own efforts; all that we say and do is a result of God's prompting love.

‘*Look*’ - John invites us to gaze, to adore on the One who saves. ‘I saw the Spirit coming down and resting on him... he will baptise with the Holy Spirit’ - We can only receive life if we allow God's Spirit to dwell in us. Without the Spirit, no one can say, “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor 12: 3) The Holy Spirit allowed John to recognise Jesus and will allow us to recognise the Lord present in our midst in the Sacraments & in his Word proclaimed in the Church.