



**Diocese
in Europe**

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

SS PETER AND PAUL, TORREVIEJA

*We worship in Word and Sacrament at Lago Jardín, Los Balcones and La Siesta
and ministering through the southern Costa Blanca and eastern Murcia.*

A truly Eucharistic community of faith and love.

Chaplain (equivalent of Parish Priest):

Father Richard A. Seabrook SSC

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FATHER RICHARD'S WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

9th February 2025

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

16th February 2025

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

23rd February 2025

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



**WELCOME TO THE CHAPLAINCY OF SS PETER AND PAUL, TORREVIEJA.
ALL ARE WELCOME TO SHARE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CHAPLAINCY.**

**Please remember to turn off your mobile phone
before our services begin.
Please don't use a mobile phone in church. Pray instead!**

**Please remember to talk to God in prayer before our services begin.
There is plenty of time to talk to each other afterwards.
Your talking may distract someone else's praying.
Please keep a devotional silence.**

Father Richard's contact details are on the front of this newsletter.

Our Churchwardens are:
Peter Maude (churchwardenpeter@gmail.com)
Jennifer Saville (chaplaincywardenjennifer@gmail.com)
They also act as Joint Treasurers.

The Vice-Chairman of the Chaplaincy Council is:
Joan Berry (losbalconeswarden@gmail.com)
Joan is also Honorary Secretary to the Chaplaincy Council.
For Chaplaincy Council matters please use:
chapsec@gmail.com

We take the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults seriously. Our Safeguarding Policy is displayed at La Siesta and Lago Jardín and is available on our website:
<https://www.c-of-e-torre vieja.com/safeguarding-policy/>
Our Safeguarding Officer is Anna Horsnell who can be contacted at
safeguardingtorrevieja@gmail.com

The Congregational Warden at La Siesta is:
Sue Maude (wardenlasiesta@gmail.com)

The Congregational Warden at Lago Jardín is:
Liz Shouksmith (shouksmithliz@gmail.com)

Nuestra Señora de la Asunción at Los Balcones, our third church,
is closed for a major rebuilding project.

Home Communions

Father Richard will take Holy Communion to people at home according to their circumstances. This is a privilege and enables for prayer in the home at difficult times and for the communicant to receive Holy Communion at home. Please never hesitate to contact me if you would like Holy Communion at home if you are unable to come to church because of sickness or being housebound.

Here are some guidelines to assist you:

1. If you can, please arrange a surface with a white cloth upon which I can place the Blessed Sacrament. If this is difficult please do not worry too much but it is appreciated.

2. The Priest will not enter into general conversation until after the celebration which lasts about ten minutes. Then he would appreciate a cup of tea and chat with you but if your circumstances don't allow, please do not worry.
3. Please consider giving a donation to the Church for the Priest's ministry. He will have had to drive to you and it also enables you to give your weekly collection to support the priestly ministry in the parish / chaplaincy. This means there can be a Priest available for you and for others with a priestly presence in the parish / chaplaincy. It is a long-established custom – if you can – to make an offering to the Church in thankfulness for the ministry of the Church.
4. You don't have to tidy up before the priest arrives! Just prepare spiritually for an encounter with Christ in the Eucharist by being prayerful before his arrival.

Father Richard writes:

Dear friends



**LENT BEGINS ON
WEDNESDAY 5TH
MARCH!**

For Christians, Lent is a most important season for a whole number of reasons.

1. The forty day season of preparation for the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. A time to prepare

ourselves spiritually for the great salvific events we celebrate during the Triduum and at Easter.

2. A season of penitence and renewal. We examine our consciences. Have we sinned in thought and word and deed? What have we done about it? Have we considered celebrating The Sacrament of Reconciliation with our Priest and making our confession?
3. As a response to the above, to engage with the three Lenten precepts: Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. How will we deny ourselves during Lent so that we can more readily take up the cross and follow Christ? What time do we set aside for prayer each day and how do we pray? Is our engagement with the Holy Eucharist indicative of our seriousness about the faith.
4. Lent comes from the old English word for lengthen. A chance to look at our lives of faith and grow in holiness and grace. As the days lengthen, it is the springtime of discipleship in the Church and our lives!
The day is come, the accepted day, when grace like nature flowers anew; trained by God's hand the surer way rejoice we in our springtime too.
5. Learn more about the Christian faith! You are invited to take part in the Lent study course in this 1700th year of the Nicene Creed...

OUR LENT COURSE THIS YEAR will be the first of two I am leading this year about the Nicene Creed, the Creed we proclaim during the Holy Eucharist which was formulated in 325 AD. Therefore, it is the 1700th anniversary of the Creed this year. We profess the Creed each week. But how much do you really know about it? How much do you understand it? Why is it



important? Have you ever thought about its significance in the light of our faith?

The first course will be during Lent and will be an introduction to more exploration later this year.

The sessions will be as follows and will take place from 1600 – 1700 Spain

time:

Monday 10 th March	Introduction
Monday 17 th March	The nature of faith
Monday 24 th March	The history of the Church's creeds
Monday 31 st March	Why the creeds matter
Monday 7 th April	The role of creeds in liturgy

They will take place via Zoom. Please do contact me if you would like to take part.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Each Chaplaincy has an electoral roll. This is a list of people attached to the Chaplaincy (it is not a membership list) who wish to be officially associated with the Chaplaincy. It enables them to attend and vote at the Annual Chaplaincy Meeting which this year is on **Tuesday 1st April at 1030 at La Siesta Church.**

The Electoral Roll has to be renewed every year and every six years we have to construct a new roll from scratch.

If you would like to be on the new roll (and fulfil the qualifications set out to be on it) please see or contact Alan Bannon who is the Electoral Roll Officer. The email address you should use for this is: erotorrevieja2@yahoo.com or see him in church. You need to fill in and sign the form and return it to him by Sunday 2nd March. **Any forms received after midnight on that day will not be accepted.**

The qualifications are:

Under the Church Representation Rules, a lay person is entitled to have his or her name entered on the roll, if the person is

- a. baptised,
- b. aged 16 or over, and
- c. has made one of the following three declarations and duly applied for enrolment.

The first declaration is that the person is a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it and is resident in the parish.

The second declaration is that the person is a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it, is not resident in the parish, but has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

The third declaration is that the person is a member in good standing of a Church which is not in communion with the Church of England but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and is also a member of the Church of England and has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

You can be on two electoral rolls. If you are on a parish electoral roll in the UK or Ireland, you can also be on this roll. That is for those who do not reside all the time in Spain but are part of our chaplaincy.

If you have any questions, please contact Alan in the first instance.

May the Lord bless you all.

Father Richard

DATES AHEAD:

Tuesday 4th March

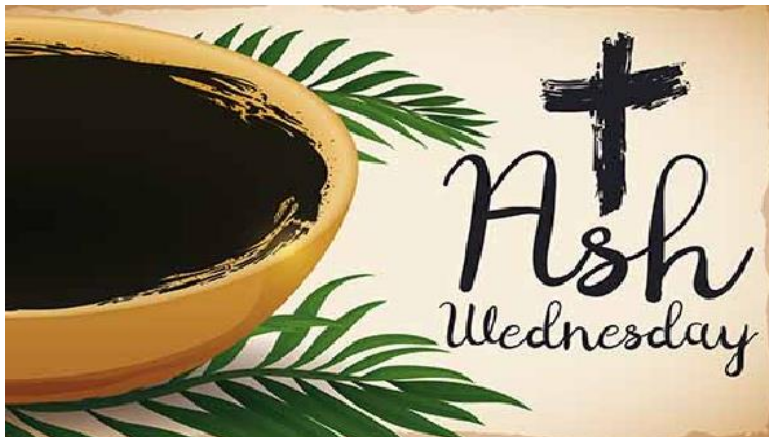
SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE PARTY 12 noon LA SIESTA



Our annual Pancake Party at La Siesta is always a great occasion and one of our big social and fundraising events for our Chaplaincy. Cake stall, raffle, tea and coffee on arrival and a chance to socialise. Soup and bread, followed by Father Richard's pancakes. This year we are going to have Pancake Tossing competition afterwards! Bring your own frying pan please for

this. Tickets available from Sue Maude at 8 euros. We have this because the next day is:

Wednesday 5th March ASH WEDNESDAY
*****DAY OF FASTING AND ABSTINENCE*****



Please start returning your palm crosses from last year. Father Richard burns these to make the ash for the imposition of ashes.

Ash Wednesday is an important day for us all as we begin our Lenten journey to Easter of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in preparation for our celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. There will be two celebrations of the Holy Eucharist:

1030 La Siesta Mass with Imposition of Ashes
1700 Lago Jardín Mass with Imposition of Ashes

You are invited to consider what Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent means for us all and begin this season well by participating in the Eucharist.



The subscriptions for 2025 are now due. It costs 20€ per number per annum and you can have as many numbers as you like. The total amount collected is split into three parts with one third going to the chaplaincy funds, one third to the Mission Possible charity

that we support and one third is prize money. The more people we have supporting this, the more we have to share out.

There are six main draws per annum and one, single prize at Christmas. If you wish to pay by bank transfer, please follow the instructions in the newsletter re transferring money to the chaplaincy.

Do please mark it clearly *100 Club* so that the treasurer is aware and notify Joan Berry also.

Joan Berry and Moira Corfield will be pleased to accept your subscription at either La Siesta Church or Lago Jardin Church.

The collection of subscriptions will be from 2nd February until 2nd March with the first draw taking place in March.

Thank you for your support.

Joan Berry

FINANCIAL GIVING TO THE CHAPLAINCY

There are various ways of giving financially to the Chaplaincy for the work of the Church:

1. You can give in the plate each week.
2. You give through the UK gift aid scheme if you are a UK tax payer.
3. **You are encouraged to set up a standing order to the Chaplaincy – this helps us budget more effectively.**
4. You can make an offset against your Spanish tax
5. if you are Spanish tax payer.

One off donations are gratefully received.

For more information contact Father Richard or the Churchwardens.

The Chaplaincy relies on generous and sacrificial giving in response to a generous God who sacrificed his Son for us all on the cross.

Spanish Bank details. Banco Sabadell.

IBAN number ES65 0081 2061 7900 0106 0414

BSAB ESBB / Capellania Anglicana de Torrevieja

UK Bank details. Barclays Bank PLC Account name: Diocese in Europe Fund

Account number: 40317039 Sort code: 20-06-13. Address : Tufton Street,London Please state TORREVIEJA as the reference so the money is correctly applied. The IBAN number is: GB16 BUKB 2006 1340 31 70 39.

God bless you all for your support. *Peter and Jennifer (Churchwardens)*

GIVING ONLINE:

<https://givealittle.co/c/3yXhRUWebr0Vqwf1OSVyV8>

**GIVING BY QR CODE, APPLE PAY,
GOOGLE WALLET:**

Hover over the QR code and go from there!
See next page...



Thank you!





THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

In this Chaplaincy...

The Chalice containing the Precious Blood of Christ is offered for those who wish to receive it. Holy Communion is offered with the words "The Body of Christ" to which you say **Amen** before consuming the Sacred Host. The words "The Blood of Christ" are said to which you say **Amen** before receiving from the Chalice. The Chalice is optional.

INTINCTION IS NOT PERMITTED FOR HEALTH AND HYGIENE REASONS.

ONGOING INFORMATION FOR OUR THREE CHURCHES SERVICES ARE SHARED BETWEEN LAGO JARDÍN AND LA SIESTA

Los Balcones, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción
remains closed for re-building.

Services in the Chaplaincy:

Date	Time	Church
Saturday 8 th February	1700	La Siesta
Sunday 9 th February	1130	Lago Jardín
Sunday 16 th February	1130	La Siesta
Saturday 22 nd February	1700	La Siesta
Sunday 23 rd February	1130	Lago Jardín
Sunday 2 nd March	1130	La Siesta
Wednesday 5th March	1030	ASH WEDNESDAY
Wednesday 5th March	1700	ASH WEDNESDAY
Saturday 8 th March	1700	La Siesta
Sunday 9 th March	1130	Lago Jardín
Sunday 16 th March	1130	La Siesta
Saturday 22 nd March	1700	La Siesta
Sunday 23 rd March	1130	Lago Jardín
Saturday 29 th March	1700	MOTHERING SUNDAY
Sunday 30 th March	1130	MOTHERING SUNDAY
Sunday 6 th April	1130	La Siesta
Saturday 12 th April	1700	PALM SUNDAY
Sunday 13 th April	1130	PALM SUNDAY

The Blessed Sacrament Lamp at Lago Jardín

burns this week for: The Chaplaincy. If you would like to dedicate the Blessed Sacrament for a week for a person, an intention, or in memory of a departed loved one, please see Father Richard. The cost is five euros for the week.



Father Richard's Prayer List for February 2025:

Please pray for the sick and those in particular need at this time: Victoria Hudson, Tommy McLucas, Moira Corfield, Michael Elliott, Lewis Elliott, Linda Thompson, Luke Thompson, David, Jamie Hill, Ed White, Rhys Miles, Gwen Simmons, Eileen Shaw, Sandra and Terry Harbut, Cliodhna pronounced Cliona Leydon, Jaime pronounced Jamie Mack, John Sunderland, Chris Hughes, Raj Panchal, Anna and Dick Horsnell, David Horsnell, Peter John, Martin Skillen, Paul McNab, Father Barry Smart, Gwyneth Manning, Lesley Critchley.
Please help Father Richard by letting him know when people can be taken off the prayer list. Please notify Father Richard of any corrections.

Please pray for the recently departed:

Those killed as a result of the conflicts in Ukraine, Israel, Lebanon and Gaza.
+ Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Please advise Father Richard if there are any corrections to the above list.

If you wish a name to be added to the list of the sick you need to email Father Richard or write to him giving permission for yourself or ensure permission has been granted by someone else for their name to appear on this list. (GDPR regulations).

Sunday 9th February 2025

Entrance Antiphon

Ps 94: 6-7

O come, let us worship God
and bow low before the God who made us,
for he is the Lord our God.

Collect

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,
that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,
they may be defended always by your protection.
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.

First reading

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

'Here I am! Send me.'

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the Temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings. And one called to another and said:

'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!'

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!'

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.'

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 138(137):1-2a. 2bc, 3. 4-5. 7c-8. R1c

In the presence of the angels I praise you, O Lord.

I thank you, LORD, with all my heart;
you have heard the words of my mouth.
In the presence of the angels I praise you.
I bow down towards your holy Temple.

In the presence of the angels I praise you, O Lord.

I give thanks to your name
for your merciful love and your faithfulness.
On the day I called, you answered me;
you increased the strength of my soul.

In the presence of the angels I praise you, O Lord.

All earth's kings shall thank you, O LORD,
when they hear the words of your mouth.
They shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
'How great is the glory of the LORD!'

In the presence of the angels I praise you, O Lord.

With your right hand you save me;
the LORD will accomplish this for me.
O LORD, your merciful love is eternal;
discard not the work of your hands.

In the presence of the angels I praise you, O Lord.

Second reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

'So we preach and so you believed.'

I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the Apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the Apostles, unworthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 4:19

Alleluia, alleluia.

Follow me, says the Lord,
and I will make you fishers of men.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 5:1-11

'They left everything and followed him.'

At that time: The crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear the word of God. He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.' And Simon answered, 'Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.' And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.' And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Homily

Last Sunday, we heard how Jesus was rejected in his hometown of Nazareth. In the verses that follow, Jesus travels to the town of Capernaum and begins his ministry of teaching and healing. While in Capernaum, Jesus cures a man possessed with a demon and heals Simon's mother-in-law. After spending some time there, Jesus prepares to preach in other places. The fact that Jesus had previously been in Simon's home and healed his mother-in-law suggests that this encounter is not the first between Jesus and Simon Peter. We can read today's Gospel, therefore, as a description of the developing relationship between Jesus and Simon Peter.

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches from Simon's boat. Jesus turns to Simon and instructs him about where to lower the fishing nets. Simon and others have been fishing throughout the night and have not caught anything. Simon protests, claiming that such an effort would be futile. Simon ultimately obeys Jesus and lowers his nets into the deeper water as directed. Notice here that Peter calls Jesus by the title "master." He already recognizes Jesus as a person of authority. They catch so many fish that the nets begin to tear; Jesus' presence has created abundance out of scarcity, just as it did at the wedding feast at Cana, which we heard at Mass just a few weeks ago.

Simon Peter becomes a follower of Jesus immediately. He calls Jesus "Lord"—the title given to Jesus after his Resurrection—and protests his worthiness to be in Jesus' presence. Today's Gospel, therefore, marks a turning point in the relationship between Jesus and Peter.

Two of Simon's partners are also named as witnesses to the event described in today's Gospel: Zebedee's sons, James and John. Yet Jesus' words are addressed only to Simon. Jesus gives Simon a new job, telling him that he will become a different kind of fisherman. No longer will he catch fish; instead he will catch people. In these words, we hear the beginning of the leadership role that Peter will have within the community of disciples. Peter was chosen for this role. His task will be to bring others to Jesus. Already he is doing so; the Gospel tells us that all the fishermen with Peter also left their nets and followed Jesus.

We continue to speak of Peter's leadership and influence in the Church today when we call the pope the "successor of Peter." We participate in the mission of the Church when we bring people to Christ through the example and positive influence of our lives.

Sunday 16th February 2025

Entrance Antiphon

Cf. Ps 30: 3-4

Be my protector, O God,
a mighty stronghold to save me.
For you are my rock, my stronghold!
Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Collect

O God, who teach us that you abide
in hearts that are just and true,
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace

as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.
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.

First reading

Jeremiah 17:5-8

**‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man; blessed is the man who trusts
in the Lord.’**

Thus says the LORD: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

‘Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 1:1-2. 3. 4, 6. R Psalm 40(39):5a

Blessed the man who has placed his trust in the LORD.

Blessed indeed is the man
who follows not the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the path with sinners,
nor abides in the company of scorners,
but whose delight is the law of the LORD,
and who ponders his law day and night.

Blessed the man who has placed his trust in the LORD.

He is like a tree that is planted
beside the flowing waters,
that yields its fruit in due season,
and whose leaves shall never fade;
and all that he does shall prosper.

Blessed the man who has placed his trust in the LORD.

Not so are the wicked, not so!
For they, like winnowed chaff,
shall be driven away by the wind.
For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Blessed the man who has placed his trust in the LORD.

Second reading

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.'

Brothers and Sisters: If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Gospel Acclamation

Luke 6:23ab

Alleluia, alleluia.

Rejoice and leap for joy, says the Lord,
for behold, your reward is great in heaven.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 6:17, 20-26

'Blessed are you who are poor. Woe to you who are rich.'

At that time: Jesus came down with the Twelve and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.'

Homily

Last Sunday we heard Jesus call Peter to be his disciple. Jesus then travels with Peter and the other disciples. Luke reports acts of healing (a person with leprosy and a paralytic man) and the call of Levi, the tax collector. Jesus also replies to questions from the Pharisees regarding fasting and the observance of the Sabbath. In the verses immediately before today's gospel reading, Jesus is reported to have chosen 12 men from among his disciples to be apostles. *Apostle* is a Greek word that means "one who is sent."

Today's gospel reading is the beginning of what is often called the Sermon on the Plain. We find a parallel to this passage in Matthew 5:1-7,11 that is often called the Sermon on the

Mount. As these titles suggest, there are differences and similarities between these gospel readings.

When spoken from the mountaintop in Matthew's Gospel, we can't miss the impression that Jesus is speaking with the authority and voice of God. The mountaintop is a symbol of closeness to God. Those who ascend the mountain see God and speak for God; recall the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments. As Luke introduces the location of Jesus' teaching, Jesus teaches on level ground, alongside the disciples and the crowd. Luke presents Jesus' authority in a different light. He is God among us.

Another distinction found in Luke's version is the audience. Luke's Sermon on the Plain is addressed to Jesus' disciples, although in the presence of the crowd; Matthew's Sermon on the Mount is addressed to the crowd. In keeping with this style, the Beatitudes in Luke's Gospel sound more personal than those in Matthew's Gospel—Luke uses the article “you” whereas Matthew uses “they” or “those.” There is also a difference in number: Matthew describes eight beatitudes; Luke presents just four, each of which has a parallel warning.

The form of the Beatitudes found in Luke's and Matthew's Gospel is not unique to Jesus. Beatitudes are found in the Old Testament, such as in the Psalms and in Wisdom literature. They are a way to teach about who will find favour with God. The word *blessed* in this context might be translated as “happy,” “fortunate,” or “favoured.”

As we listen to this Gospel, the Beatitudes jar our sensibilities. Those who are poor, hungry, weeping, or persecuted are called blessed. This is, indeed, a Gospel of reversals. Those often thought to have been forgotten by God are called blessed. In the list of “woes,” those whom we might ordinarily describe as blessed by God are warned about their peril. Riches, possessions, laughter, reputation . . . these are not things that we can depend upon as sources of eternal happiness. They not only fail to deliver on their promise; our misplaced trust in them will lead to our demise. The ultimate peril is in misidentifying the source of our eternal happiness.

The Beatitudes are often described as a framework for Christian living. Our vocation as Christians is not to be first in this world, but rather to be first in the eyes of God. We are challenged to examine our present situation in the context of our ultimate horizon, the Kingdom of God.

Sunday 23rd February 2025

Entrance Antiphon

Ps 12: 6

O Lord, I trust in your merciful love.
My heart will rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me.

Collect

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, always pondering spiritual things,
we may carry out in both word and deed

that which is pleasing to you.
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.

First reading

1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

**'The Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out
my hand against the Lord's anointed.'**

In those days: Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph with three thousand chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

David and Abishai went to the army by night. And there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay round him. Then Abishai said to David, 'God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice.' But David said to Abishai, 'Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?' So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head, and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen upon them.

Then David went over to the other side and stood far off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them. David said, 'Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and take it. The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the LORD gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the LORD's anointed.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 103(102):1-2. 3-4. 8, 10. 12-13. R8a

The LORD is compassionate and gracious.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all within me, his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious.

It is the Lord who forgives all your sins,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with mercy and compassion.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
He does not treat us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our faults.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far from us does he remove our transgressions.
As a father has compassion on his children,
the LORD'S compassion is on those who fear him.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious.

Second reading

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

'Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.'

Brothers and Sisters: 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Gospel Acclamation

John 13:34

Alleluia, alleluia.

A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord,
that you love one another, just as I have loved you.
Alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 6:27-38

'Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.'

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you; and from one who takes away your goods, do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

'If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

'Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.'

Homily

Today's gospel reading is a continuation of the teaching that began in last Sunday's gospel. We continue to hear Jesus' Sermon on the Plain. Recall that in Luke's Gospel, this teaching is addressed to Jesus' disciples. This is in contrast to the parallel found in Matthew's Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus' words are addressed to both the disciples and to the crowds.

These words from Jesus' teaching are familiar to us. They constitute the crux and the challenge of what it means to be a disciple: Love your enemies, turn the other cheek, give to those who ask, do unto others, lend without expecting repayment, judge not lest you be judged.

There are several similarities between Luke's and Matthew's report of Jesus' great teaching. Both begin with the Beatitudes. Matthew includes nearly all the content that Luke does; the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel is longer than Luke's Sermon on the Plain. There are, however, differences in language and nuance. For example, Matthew presents this portion of the teaching as a contrast between Jesus' teaching and the teachings of the law and the prophets. This is in keeping with Matthew's concern to address his predominantly Jewish audience. It is likely that Luke omits this contrast because it was unnecessary for the Gentile believers for whom Luke is writing.

Another point of contrast between Matthew and Luke's presentation is the terminology. In Luke, Jesus contrasts the behaviour of his followers with the behaviour of "sinners." In Matthew, Jesus contrasts the behaviour desired with the behaviour of tax collectors and Gentiles. Matthew concludes the teaching about love of enemies with the admonition to be perfect as God is perfect; Luke concludes by emphasizing God's mercy.

In both Gospels, Jesus' words challenge those who would follow him to be more like God. God loves us beyond our expectations, beyond anything we can possibly imagine. In response to God's love, we are to love as God loves, beyond expectations and with a depth beyond imagining.



Think about Lent now and get ready for Ash Wednesday...



The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it unto me according to Thy Word.

Hail Mary, (as above)

And the Word was made flesh,
And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, (as above)

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that as we have
known the incarnation of thy son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by
His + cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection.
Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.