

Readings and Reflections for the Week

Sunday 21 June - ST ALBAN

Reading 1, Jeremiah 20:10-13, Psalm 68(69)

Reading 2, Romans 5:12-15

Gospel, Matthew 10:26-33

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body

Monday 22 June - ST JOHN FISHER and St THOMAS MORE

Reading 1, 2 Maccabees 6:18,21,24-31

Psalm 125(126), Gospel, Matthew 10:34-39

He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it

Tuesday 23 June - St Ethelreda

Reading 1, 2 Kings 19:9-11,14-21,31-36

Psalm 47(48), Gospel, Matthew 7:6,12-14

Treat others as you would like them to treat you

Wednesday 24 June - THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Reading 1, Isaiah 49:1-6, Psalm 138(139)

Reading 2, Acts 13:22-26, Gospel, Luke 1:57-66,80

His name is John

Thursday 25 June - Feria

Reading 1, 2 Kings 24:8-17

Psalm 78(79), Gospel, Matthew 7:21-29

The wise man built his house on rock

Friday 26 June - Feria

Reading 1, 2 Kings 25:1-12

Psalm 136(137), Gospel, Matthew 8:1-4

'If you want to, you can cure me'

Saturday 27 June - Blessed Virgin Mary on a Saturday

*10am Confessions, Exposition and Benediction
no Mass*

Reading 1, Lamentations 2:2,10-14,18-19

Psalm 73(74), Gospel, Matthew 8:5-17

'I am not worthy to have you under my roof: give me the word, and my servant will be healed'

Sunday 28 June - ST PETER AND ST PAUL

Reading 1, Acts 12:1-11, Psalm 33(34)

Reading 2, 2 Timothy 4:6-8,17-18

Gospel, Matthew 16:13-19

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church

United with Churches together in St Albans this week we pray for all members of Dagnall Street Baptist Church.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK

St John Fisher

John was born in 1469 in Beverley, in Yorkshire. At 14, he went to Cambridge university where, he quickly excelled as a scholar and intellectual, whilst pursuing the priesthood and was ordained in 1491. Aged 35, in 1504, he was made both Chancellor of Cambridge and Bishop of Rochester. He focused on improving the preaching and theological content in England. He is considered the greatest preacher of the 16th century. His most famous surviving sermons are 10 based on the seven Penitential Psalms which are appreciated now but were much more controversial in the time of the Reformation and Lutheranism movement. At this time, King Henry VIII had been crowned and was facing troubles regarding the validity of his marriage. In 1534, it was declared that all public officials must swear in agreement that the marriage of King Henry and Catherine was illegal and invalid but John Fisher refused. He was immediately imprisoned in the Tower of London for his defiance. Although he lost the university Chancellorship and was no longer Bishop, it was the loss of all sacraments and priestly visits that were much harder for John. On 22 June 1535, he was brought to execution. With his head on the execution block, he again proclaimed his Catholic faith, prayed the Te Deum. His body was buried in a local churchyard, but soon moved into the chapel of the Tower of London to stop people from looking to the grave as a saintly shrine.

St Thomas More

Thomas was born in 1478 in London. His father was a lawyer and judge on the King's bench, meaning Thomas' family had valuable connections and the wealth. By age 13, he was the page for the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1492, he began studying at Oxford. He then studied law and trained in London until he began to practice in 1502. In 1504, Thomas was elected into Parliament. In 1505, he married Jane Colt. Just 6 years later, Jane died, leaving behind three daughters and a son. Thomas quickly remarried Alice Middleton. Thomas was an extremely talented writer. One of his famous works, "Utopia," is still widely appreciated. More continued to quickly rise in power and in 1529 he succeeded Cardinal Wolsey as the Lord Chancellor of England. He was perfect for this role. He was loyal to the King, worked with amazing speed, and was extremely effective. He also worked hard to defend the Catholic Church in England and maintain complete religious freedom. However, like John Fisher, he eventually hit a problem in his relationship with the King. When ordered to give approval of King Henry VIII's annulment from Catherine, he refused; upholding his beliefs and those of the Catholic

Church. Like John Fisher, he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. On 6 July 1535, Thomas was executed. As he prepared to be executed he stated that he was "the king's good servant, but God's first."

Both men were canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1935. Saint Thomas More was proclaimed the patron saint of statesmen and lawyers. Saint John Fisher was made the patron saint of the Diocese of Rochester.

Prayer

Saints John Fisher and Thomas More, your fidelity to the truth and your courage left behind a shining example for all to see. Though your deaths appeared to be defeats at the time, your love of God and love for the king who killed you live on. Please pray for me, that I will imitate your courage and fidelity to Christ, going so far as to lay down my life, in every way that I am called, for the glory of God and the salvation of others. Saints John Fisher and Thomas More, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

REFLECTIONS

Taken from The Wednesday Word {www.wednesdayword.org}

Gospel, Matthew 10:26-33

This whole chapter of Matthew brings together and sums up what Jesus has to say to his apostles about declaring his teaching in the face of hostility and persecution. Jesus himself was fearless in proclaiming his message. He 'taught with authority', as the gospel constantly tells us. His disciples are sent out to do the same. We do not often meet with real persecution, although it may yet happen. The martyrs of communist Russia or Vietnam lived many years of peaceful Christianity before unexpectedly facing martyrdom. The monk martyrs of Algeria did not reckon on martyrdom when they went to Algeria. The only preparation for martyrdom can be fidelity and prayer. More often we face mockery for holding to Christian principles, and that too can be difficult to bear. We can be accused of narrow mindedness, lack of appreciation of human values, blind obedience, sentimentality, naivety, and a host of other hurtful slurs. Jesus did not promise that the Father would prevent the sparrows falling to the ground! Neither is it always easy to respond to such slurs with the patience and generosity as well as the truthfulness which Jesus would have shown. 'A spoonful of honey attracts more flies than a barrelful of vinegar', said St Francis de Sales.

Do I fearlessly proclaim the Gospel? What situations in the coming week might require courage? How can I grow in courage?

First Reading Jeremiah 20:10-13

Jeremiah was the last prophet in Jerusalem before the Babylonians sacked the city and took most of the inhabitants into exile as slaves in 586 BC. He was sent as a final warning, to tell them all, from the king downwards, that disaster was impending if they did not amend their ways and turn back to the Lord. The authorities didn't like it, and accused him of sabotaging the morale of the citizens. He was arrested and dumped in an empty water storage pit to keep him quiet. He himself was a gentle soul and hated delivering this fierce message, complaining to the Lord about his tough and unpalatable task, and the persecution he suffered. But he stuck to his guns, and when the king tore up the threatening message he sent, Jeremiah merely repeated it - with more besides. He also had a message of hope, that eventually the Lord would give them a new covenant, with a new heart and a new spirit, so that they would again be the People of God. This reading is chosen to show in the Old Testament the courage and perseverance in proclaiming the message that, in the gospels, Jesus asks from his disciples.

When is it most difficult to take a stand and announce that I hold Christian principles? Do I manage to do this?

Second Reading Romans 5:12-15

Christ is the saviour, but how does he save? The Letter to the Romans is Paul's fullest explanation, and the heart of that teaching is that Christ is the Second Adam. Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, as described in Genesis, is not a simple historical story of one particular sin. It is the paradigm of all sin, the paradigm or analysis of all human failure, the process of turning away from God's commandments in pride and independence: 'I know better than God what is good for me.' We are children of Adam in so far as we have sinned, and Adam's sin sums up that of all humanity. At the same time, Adam is not only the type, but also the founder of all humanity. Christ, by way of contrast, is the second founder of all humanity. His act of perfect obedience to his Father on the cross transcends and heals this act of disobedience committed by the first Adam. Only Christ's act of loving obedience could be great enough to do this. It had to be an act of a man, but not of a mere man. We are members of this new humanity in so far as we join ourselves to Christ, put all our trust and hope in him.

Can you see any similarity between the sin of Adam and our own sins?