

ONE THEME EACH WEEKDAY MASS

This could be very useful especially for parochial priests

On ferias the Lectionary gives us two readings which are unconnected.

In order to help the celebrant and congregation take away a message for the day, I have found it helpful to find one single idea arising from the two passages of scripture given for the day.

This is not too difficult to do.

It has been a very good exercise in that it means meditating on the readings before Mass.

The pages that follow were worked out in about 1984/5 and have proved useful since then.

I firmly believe that a good succinct introduction to the Mass is probably more important than a homily.

If we gather the people together and lead them with a simple idea so that they can then understand the Word of God for that day, then we can let the Word of God do its business even without our preaching about it.

Have you noticed how the celebrant so often rushes into preaching as though his words are the real thing whereas the readings that came before were only the prelude!

In addition we can usually lead the people from our introduction to the reason for the Penitential Rite that day and maybe take this Rite from out of the readings.

The notes that follow are not to be read out verbatim as an introduction to the Mass, rather they are offered as an idea of how to make the scriptural message of the Mass more memorable and comprehensible for the people.

The ideas might give a pointer as to just one of the many messages from the readings of the day.

Each celebrant would work out a single message relevant for himself and his congregation on that particular day.

The following comes in four sections

Advent Yr 1 & 2

Lent and Easter Yr 1 & 2

Weekdays Yr 1

Weekdays Yr2

You can print of the sheets in Word page set up top and bottom 1cm,
left and right 1.5 cm

Anthony Plummer September 1994 updated November 2010

ONE THEME EACH WEEKDAY MASS
ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE YEARS 1 & 2

Advent Week 1

Mon Christ's reign will bring in a new order.

All nations will come to him and he will bring peace to everyone if they follow his ways.

Tues Man looks forward to a leader who will herald a golden age. 'Why doesn't someone do something about it', is the cry, when there is injustice or trouble. Jesus is the man the prophets looked forward to. He offers himself to all who will humble themselves, not offering justice now, but in his eternal kingdom.

Wed We all look forward to a great golden age when Christ will be Lord, and God will achieve his plan for the world or for us - our destiny. The Prophet Isaiah looked forward to that age which was started by Jesus when he took away some of the sorrows of life by curing the sick and gave us a glimpse of the heavenly banquet with the feeding of the multitude. The Mass is a foretaste of the time when, 'we shall dwell in the Lord's own house for ever'. (Ps)

Thurs We all want security. The Church gives us that, symbolised by the New Jerusalem. However, just being a member doesn't give us a sure passport to the total security of heaven. Worshipping God truly, as the Church shows us, will bring us to the 'Lord's own gates'.

Fri Isaiah prophesied an age of goodness when people would have their eyes opened to the true justice and the proper way of living. Then we will be able to lift up our heads in pride. 'Jesus the Lord is my light' (Ps). By faith in him we can live in harmony. Jesus shows this is possible by opening the eyes of two blind people after demanding faith from them.

Sat God does care about sufferings, about unemployment. However, He asks us to help him and each other. Thus the golden age of plenty will come about if we are willing to be apostles and spread the good news and care for each other.

Advent Week 2

Mon 'God is coming to help us'. He does lift our burdens, as Isaiah prophesied. One way he does this is by freeing us from sin, giving us a second chance. Only God can free us. Not political powers or money etc.

Tues 'God is coming in power' (Ps). Today we have the consolation of forgiveness. God cares for the sinner, it is worth shouting about.

Wed Many people feel overburdened by troubles. They feel that God does not know or care about them. Isaiah pointed out that God, who keeps the universe in order, does see and care. Jesus tells us to put our cares on him and he will give us peace of mind at least. (Penitential rite from 2nd v of psalm).

Thurs Let us not be afraid, God has come as promised by Isaiah. Courageously take hold of your faith, (like Mother Teresa) and do extraordinary things. As Jesus says, we have to take his kingdom by storm. We have the spirit and power of God in us, who should be afraid?

Fri People who don't want to be pleased will never be satisfied but will always find something about which to complain. Jesus knew this well and, as Isaiah pointed out, they are their own worst enemies, spoiling all the good things God wants for them. Think positively about God and happiness will be yours.

Sat Today we think about the prophet Elijah. It was thought by the Jews that he would come again before the Messiah. In fact John the Baptist came in his place.

Mon We question who the prophets are. We always want to know by whose authority someone speaks. So people questioned Jesus and John the Baptist. But God can speak through anyone he chooses, even pagan prophets like Balaam.

Tues 'This poor man called; the Lord heard him' (Ps) Poor in the sense of being caught up in sin, in vice, in weakness. God will forgive us and we won't even feel shame. In fact the sinners are often the first to become God's friends in his kingdom exactly because of the humility caused by their weakness.

Wed Who is this Jesus whose birthday we are preparing for? John the Baptist's disciples asked the question and Jesus pointed to his works as proof of what he was. He is man and God. We get some idea of who God is from what Isaiah says of Him.

Thurs God is a God of love and tenderness. This Advent we can meditate on his forgiveness and faithfulness to us, unworthy as we are. In fact, as Jesus said, only we can cut ourselves off from his constant forgiveness as the Pharisees did who refused John's call and thwarted God's plan for them.

Fri Everyone without exception, even the most wretched outcast, is welcome to the Lord's gifts in full. How are they to receive it? By listening to Jesus who speaks with the full authority of the Father.

17 December Christ would come from true Jewish stock from the tribe of Judah. This was promised long beforehand and we see today how this was fulfilled. This was all decreed by God from all eternity that God would really become one of us, with a family and background like any other man.

18 December Jeremiah looked through a time of difficulty for his people to the promises of a great time ahead. Joseph is in a different type of difficulty with a pregnant fiancée on his hands is told to look forward to a great foster son.

19 December Today we think of two men who were chosen before their births to help their people. Both were to be abstemious. Samson rescued his people from the Philistines by God's power. John the Baptist prepared them to be rescued from their sins by the power of God made man himself.

20 December Just as a child was promised to King Ahab, so a child was promised to Mary. The former did not want a sign from God but stubbornly wanted his own way. Mary, on the other hand, accepted God's gift willingly.

21 December The Lord is carried on a journey in the womb of his mother. He brings joy to Elizabeth and John the Baptist as yet unborn. The Lord is in our midst. He can bring joy to those to whom we journey at this Christmas period.

22 December Mary and Hannah both give thanks to God for the gift of their specially given children. They are both born for the special mission, and given over to God.

23 December God sent messengers to prepare his people. Elijah who converted the people from idolatry to the worship of the one true God. The new Elijah, John the Baptist, changed the hearts of his hearers. We need to be reconverted to receive Christ properly this Christmas.

24 December The Lord promised David that his royal house should last for ever. In order of strict history it did not, but the promise was remembered by the people in Our Lord's time and fulfilled by him in a way beyond all expectations. An eternal King indeed.

CHRISTMASTIDE

Yrs 1 & 2

29 December By his birth, Jesus brought light into the world. Simeon called him the light to the gentiles. St John says, therefore, we must live by the light and love the things of the light. Hatred, for example, is not compatible with living with God's enlightenment.

30 December The prophetess Anna spoke about the baby Jesus to all who would listen. He who is God and man has brought a new way into the world. As St John says, His coming means we are to live not only as mere earthly humans but as people getting ready to be with God as well.

31 December Christ is God before he became man; he gives us grace to do anything we need to do because we are to become sons of God. In other words, as St John says, we are living in 'the last days' and have been anointed and given new knowledge. We should use this grace to live as new people.

2 January We must be sure whom this Jesus is, whose birthday we have been celebrating. He existed from all eternity, as St John insisted. Many people would like to play this down. In fact it was only a very short time before John had to warn about heretics - or anti-christs. We see also how he insists that the greatest prophet up to that time - John the Baptist - was quite clear that he was nothing compared with Jesus.

3 January Jesus came to take away our sins and baptised us as children of his Father. Therefore we try to remain free from sin.

Monday after Epiphany. Today we hear how the Christ started in earnest his public ministry. He teaches the crowd and shows by miracles that God's spirit is in the world. This spirit is in us, as St John later wrote, enabling all peoples to accept Christ and have God live in them.

Tuesday after Epiphany. We are able to love because we have first learned what love is by being loved ourselves.

God loves us. His Son abundantly showed this by his practical concern for the material needs of the people e.g. in feeding the five thousand. Unlike his followers on that occasion, ours is not just to be cupboard love.

Wednesday after Epiphany. Jesus had to teach his apostles to open their minds to him. St John says that if we open our minds we can be aware just how much God loves us.

Today we are urged, then, to wake up to the truth of God's love for us, so we can really love others.

Thursday after Epiphany. We can try to imagine the electric atmosphere on that first day when Jesus preached in the synagogue at home. The excitement that the time had come when the Messiah who would bring good news and happiness. St John says we are to continue his work of spreading love about. Do we have this excitement about loving others?

Friday after Epiphany. Today we are offered the choice to accept Faith in Jesus or not. St John, writing at the end of his life, insists on the truth of Christ and that belief in him will give us eternal life.

We see in the gospel, what one man had to gain by having faith in Jesus.

Saturday after Epiphany. Today we come to the end of Christmas-tide. Through it we have been reminded of the new start given the world by Christ's birth. John the Baptist pointed to this man. St John the Apostle says it has made us new men and therefore we ought to be free from sin.

ONE THEME EACH WEEKDAY MASS
LENT and EASTERTIDE YEARS 1 & 2

ASH WEDNESDAY Contradiction seemingly between public acts of penance from the Prophet Joel and for private penance according to Gospel. Either way we are to do penance on behalf of others, as St Paul says.

Thurs A choice is offered to us at the start of Lent, choose God's ways or our own. If we choose his way we have everything to gain. But it will mean the cross.

Fri Today we think about fasting. Jesus said we would have to fast. However, the right type of fasting is not so much concerned with what we do not eat or drink, but in right living.

Sat The Lord promised us so much if we will just turn back to live his ways. But it is not that we earn it. In fact he comes to offer us his gifts, even before we are converted.

Lent Week 1

Mon How are we to live? During Lent we are helped to examine our consciences so that we will be able to live right lives for the Day of Judgment.

Tues God has sent his word. God speaks and it is done. In time the word was made flesh and taught us what human words could be linked with Him who is the Word, so that they will find hearing before God.

Wed (Ps) God will not spurn us if we do humbly admit our faults, as the people of Nineveh did. But we shall be heavily judged if we refuse to do so after the warnings Jesus himself has given us.

Thurs (Ps) The Lord will answer when we call. Just as Queen Esther asked and received. So Jesus tells us to keep on asking our Father for what we need.

Fri If we do turn over a new leaf God will forgive even our most punishable offences. The chief of these is hatred and bad treatment of our neighbour.

Sat If we obey God's commands he will make us his own special people. His commands include treating others properly.

Lent Week 2

Mon It is good to admit our guilt but we cannot even judge ourselves. We tell God we have sinned, we ask him not to treat us as our sins deserve, then we look to him to reward us amazingly.

Tues We are invited today to discuss our wrong doing sensibly with God. If we are to be teachers of others, which we are, we have to be sure we are not hypocrites. Let's get things straight.

Wed The good person upsets our selfish ways of acting. He is a reminder that we ought to change our ways. Thus the prophet Jeremiah was ill treated. Thus Jesus knew he would be. Thus we, his friends, will be.

Thurs Where do we put our interests? There is a danger that if we put our interests in ourselves, or in our influential friends or in this world, we shall end up like the rich man in Jesus' parable. If we trust in the Lord we shall prosper, at least in the next world.

Fri Today we have a parallel between the favourite son, Joseph, sold as a slave to Egypt who yet was the saviour of his family, and Jesus, the favourite son, who yet saves mankind, as Jesus tells us in a parable.

Lent Week 2 contd.

Sat Today we hear from the Prophet Micah a prayer for forgiveness and care from God for his people. Jesus answered this prayer in a great parable.

Lent Week 3

Mon Today we think about a pagan called Naaman. He was a leper cured by his grudging belief in the power of the true God. Jesus says any outsider like that often has more faith than the seeming practising pious people. We should look to see:

- 1) What is our attitude to non-Christians?
- 2) Is our faith as deep as our religious practice?

Tues We cry to the Lord for deliverance when we are in trouble. We ask for his forgiveness. Jesus reminds us that we should act as we expect God to act towards us - viz. by forgiving others. (Our Father)

Wed God has given us commandments. We should thank him for that and be proud of the fact that at least we have the instructions as to how to make the world work properly.

Thurs People will always find reasons to criticise God's religion so that they do not have to face up to the mystery of God. We should take comfort in the fact that Jesus faced nonsensical accusations himself, and make sure we do not harden our hearts to the difficulties of our faith.

Fri Today we are urged to love God. To make him our priority in our lives, his ways not our ways. Thus we will love ourselves and our neighbours properly. Thus we shall be rewarded by seeing everything through his eyes and find it for our good. Following any other priority leads to sadness and dissatisfaction.

Sat (Ps) 'What I want is love not sacrifice'. God wants us to be constant and faithful in our love even if we have little to offer and often fall. Keeping the commandments and giving alms is useless without love.

Lent Week 4

(*Alternative any day.*) (Ps) 'The Lord is my light ...' If we look to the Lord he will enlighten us, show us the right path, just as he gave physical sight to the blind man. When in doubt, seek the help of friends, but be sure to seek God's.

Mon After the trials of life and the mortifications of Lent God has promised us great joy symbolised by a golden age. But much more important than physical well being is interior happiness. Jesus sometimes gives the former as a sign of the latter, and St John calls his miracles 'signs'.

Tues Water flowing from the Temple area brings life and healing. This was a foretaste of the graces, e.g. of forgiveness, flowing from the new temple - the Church.

Wed 'TIME' 'At the favourable time I will answer you,' said God through the prophet Isaiah. Jesus said he was the spokesman for his Father, giving His answer.

Thurs Moses saved his people by pleading for them. Jesus warned the Jews that they would not be saved just by relying on Moses or being his people.

In other words he is telling them and us that we will be accountable for our own behaviour.

2nd Theme: Frustration - God with his people, Jesus with Jewish leaders. Both are forgivable if they CHANGED.

Fri People will talk behind our backs if we try to do good. If we prick their consciences they will try to find fault. This is true of the prophets or any good person who is a 'son of God'. It was equally true of Jesus.

Sat If we try to follow God we will always find people who persecute us. However, thanks be to God for a few people who stick up for us, as did Nicodemus for Jesus.

Lent Week 5

(Alternative any day) God raises us up from the dead

- 1) at the last day
- 2) sometimes by a miracle in this life
- 3) Spiritually, by his grace. This is what Lent is about.

Mon Two women accused of adultery. God used them both to show, first his justice, secondly his mercy. Let us think twice before we criticise others. First we do not know all the facts, secondly we too are sinners.

Tues It was by putting a serpent on a pole that the Israelites were cured if they had been bitten. Jesus put on a cross saves the whole world. Especially should we look upon him.

Wed People will hate us and some may want to get rid of us because we believe in the one true God. e.g. certain civil leaders, certain educationalists, certain medical people etc. But our hope is precisely in God, as was that of the three men put into the furnace, and as was that of Jesus.

Thurs God made a promise to Abraham our great father in faith. Jesus claimed to be greater than Abraham and to have existed before him. His promise is therefore more valid.

Fri The people wanted to catch the prophet Jeremiah in his speech so they could get rid of him. Likewise with Jesus. In the end though, truth will prevail, even if it is after the death of the person telling it.

Sat It was prophesied that a descendant of King David would once more rule in Jerusalem drawing the nations together. We know it was to be Jesus who by the envy and power play of the Jewish leaders was made that man by his death in Jerusalem.

Holy Week

Mon Jesus came, as Isaiah prophesied, to open our eyes and set us free. We see Jesus doing just that, and how the leaders wanted his death precisely on these grounds through jealousy that he was gathering more followers than they were.

Tues Today we think of three people who were asked to help God in his work and how they fared. Isaiah was called as a prophet and became the light to the nations.

Judas called to be an apostle betrayed his master.

Peter called to be the first pope meant well, but started badly.

We at least can try to speak up for our Saviour. (Ps) 'My lips will tell of your help.'

Spy Wed We think how Judas betrayed his master. We think how Jesus did not change his plans because of this, but carried on his good work, not hiding from insults and persecution, as Isaiah had prophesied.,

Easter Week

Mon The first message the Church has to give, is, that Jesus is risen.

Today we listen to part of the very first Christian sermon - it is all about the Resurrection.

We hear how news of it spread and also how in another quarter it was suppressed.

Easter Week contd.

Tues The first fruit of the Resurrection is that we can be saved from our sins. Peter draws this conclusion in his very first sermon. Mary Magdalene the one-time sinner is the first to see the risen Lord.

Wed Two disciples did not recognise the risen Jesus until they saw the sign of his breaking bread (possibly offering the mass). We cannot see him but we can be aware of him by what he does through the Church,

e.g. the miracles that the apostles and their successors perform to heal people physically and spiritually.

Thurs Miracles are not enough, they need explaining so that we can accept God's message.

Thus the apostles had to explain to the people who were impressed with the healing of the lame man.

Likewise, Jesus explained the scriptures to the apostles impressed by his risen appearances.

Fri The apostles were fearless in persisting in their story of the risen Christ even in front of the highest Jewish authority. This is not surprising since they had seen him helping them in the task in which they themselves were experts - fishing.

Sat Even the Jewish leaders who opposed Christ could not confute the evidence of miracles done.

Sadly they did not want to believe. Jesus had upbraided his apostles for being so doubtful.

However, later they spoke with confidence. We must ask for the same strong faith.

Easter Week 2

Mon What gave the apostles their strong convictions was the Holy Spirit poured out on them.

Jesus told Nicodemus that it is necessary to be born again in the same Spirit.

Tues The miracle of the Church. Fancy people giving up everything for a person whom they have never seen and whom it is claimed rose from the dead. Right from the start, and for two thousand years, people have lived heroically Christian lives. This can only be by the power of Christ's Spirit living in them. We cannot see Him, but we can see His effects, as Jesus told Nicodemus.

Wed God wants everyone to hear the good news. Some try to lock up the truth in the dark.

The Jewish leaders tried imprisoning the first apostles but God showed by releasing them that his work and word is greater than man's narrow-mindedness.

Thurs Whom should we believe? Whom should we obey? Jesus is to be trusted because his teaching comes from heaven. We should obey God and our conscience rather than even the highest authority on earth if this is in conflict.

Fri We are to look at Our Lord's life and then judge whether he is of heaven or just an impostor or a mistaken good man. The five thousand obviously believed in him.

Sat The apostles had seen strange sights such as Jesus walking on the water. They knew then that they were special people protected by God. It was not hard for them to exert their power and create a new order in the Church as deacons etc. They knew God's spirit would back them up.

Easter Week 3

Mon People will twist Our Lord's words. They twisted those of Stephen. They certainly ignored the words of Jesus though they followed him out of cupboard love. Belief in Jesus is what he wants.

Tues What a pity that so many people will not listen to the good news Jesus has come to bring. But we are free to be blind, to refuse the truth, as the Jewish leader did. If, on the other hand, we are open to God's spirit, the, like Stephen, we will see God's glory and believe such marvellous teachings as that about the gift of the bread of life we receive at this mass.

Easter Week 3 contd.

Wed The result of the first Christian Martyrdom and persecution was that Christ's message was preached even further a field to more people. In fact, as Jesus says in today's gospel, he wants people to bring eternal life to all who believe in him.

Thurs Jesus said, 'no one can come to him unless God draws them.' We see an example of this with an Ethiopian official. The grace of God can call people miraculously.

The Church will always draw people to Christ, really present in the Eucharist, even when we least expect.

Fri Anyone who eats the bread Jesus gives will be brought to life. What do we mean by living?

Well, St Paul is an example of a man miraculously reborn; having been a great rival of Christianity he became a man eaten up with real love of Jesus.

Sat Jesus asks for faith in himself, for people to respond to the call God makes on them.

The Church makes this call and offers us, too, miracles to elicit our faith, even the raising of the dead.

Ultimately we have to make a decision with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Easter Week 4

Cf alternative gospel,

Mon Jesus is the good shepherd who wants to bring all sheep to one flock. The first Christians had a problem; should converts first become Jews or not - the original chosen people? Peter is given a special revelation to explain to him that God wants all people to become Christians, immediately.

Easter Week 4 contd.

Tues The Father and the Son are one, so God wants us all to be one. Christ's shepherd hood is over all. The Church quickly found out that they were to preach the good news both to Jews and pagans (or Greeks).

Cf Psalm, 'O praise the Lord ALL you nations.

Wed Jesus came to throw light on God's life and love. In fact he is the light of God which we refuse at our peril. We see how his love urged the apostles on in their teaching of this knowledge and love of God.

Thurs If we welcome Jesus then we welcome God. But to make it easier, Jesus says that if we welcome anyone he sends, we welcome him. Now God had sent many messengers and he still does, either prophets, teachers or the ordinary men and women we meet

Fri What we have to offer is the good news, just as the apostles were delighted to offer it to their own people, viz. a way out of their mistakes.

Jesus is the way in this world that leads us from our sinfulness back to the Father.

Sat How sad it is that some people refuse to recognise God the Father. Jesus came precisely to show us what God is like, since he is God made man. If some refuse God's great kindness, others will happily accept.

Easter Week 5

Mon We rejoice in the knowledge we have about God and Christ, but we aren't proud on our own account. Not to us the glory but to God. (Ps). It is the Spirit of God within us that is all powerful, not our own intelligence and will.

Tues It is good that Jesus left his friends, because he could then send them his Holy Spirit to live in them. He brings true peace. One way we see his work is in organising the Church to live and spread harmoniously.

Wed God has to prune us, his Church, in order for it to bear good fruit. Thus man does not need to do any pruning. In other words, if God accepts us into his family we do not have to impose more conditions for membership. This was a lesson the early Church had to struggle to find out.

But Jesus had promised to guide his people and he did this indeed. He still does.

Easter Week 5 contd.

Fri If we keep God's commandments we will bear much fruit. The first council of the Church at Jerusalem established a pattern for the Church by using its apostolic authority to issue commands to help people to grow and bear fruit. This is the only reason the Church makes any rules.

Sat Sometimes the Church does well as we see with St Paul's missionary journeys. Always, however, as Jesus told us, we must expect persecution. Not everyone will accept what we believe.

Easter Week 6

Mon Christians will always suffer persecution by people who think they are doing the right thing. Thank God they have always been encouraged also by the 'weaker' sex, as was Our Lord and the Apostles.

Tues It is good that Jesus left us in his bodily appearance, because he would then live in us by his Spirit. This Holy Spirit is all powerful, working in and through us. Today we have an example of his activity (1st r.)

Wed The Holy Spirit of Jesus will speak in all ages with the same authority as Christ who is one with the Father. We see the spirit at work in the 'University' at Athens. Some wise men reject it, others accept it.

Thurs (when Ascension is kept on a Sunday) Sometimes it is necessary to speak fearlessly and straight to people who either disagree with you or are critical of you or even do not like you. Paul told the Jewish people straight and we find the synagogue leader is converted. Jesus pulls no punches with his disciples.

(Ascension) *Thur* The world will rejoice because it can do away with god and religion. Now people are FREE from constraint. We see the results! Even religious people, even Christians give up the teachings of god and Christ. But others will come to the Faith. Sometimes this is precisely because they see that life has no meaning without God and his ways. We see Paul preaching successfully to the pagans. Ps. The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations.

Fri Jesus warned the Apostles that they would be sad to see Jesus leave at the Ascension, but he had promised them joy. We see an example of how they found joy and help from an unexpected source, though after suffering.

Sat To know God is good. We can ask God for anything. To know Jesus is better since it makes us more intimate with him. We, like the apostles, can help others to know God better.

Easter Week 7

Mon Today we read Jesus' prophecy that his apostles would cowardly desert him. Also that they would find peace with him. We see too how they did return and work with his spirit in them.

Tues Like Jesus, shortly before his passion, St Paul, before his, makes an attestation of his faithfulness to his religious duty. Please God, we will be able to say the same when we come to the end of our lives and be a good example like Jesus is.

Wed Today we hear how St Paul and Jesus both prayed for their followers when they knew they were to leave them for the last time. We can be sure the saints, and indeed, Jesus himself, still pray for us.

Thurs A sign of the true Church is its unity of belief, throughout the world and throughout all ages. St Paul used the disunity amongst the Jews in their beliefs to the advantage of his teaching.

Easter Week 7 contd.

Fri Jesus prophesied that Peter would be led to death.

Today we see how the other great founder of the Church, Paul, came to be led to death also in Rome.

Sat Today we read about St Paul's last years. He was able to proclaim the good news freely in Rome before his martyrdom. St John was not to be martyred but preached the gospel to the end of a long life, and wrote his account years later to correct untruths already creeping into the teachings.

ONE THEME EACH WEEKDAY MASS
YEAR 1

Week 1

Mon Starting the ordinary time of the year of the Church, we ponder upon God's great condescension in sending to teach us, so great a person. No one could be higher (as the letter to the Hebrews points out). Then the still greater condescension that God chooses to continue this work through ordinary men - the apostles, you and me.

Tues Today we think of the power of Christ. He was sent as the God-man who has all things in his hands. God did not send an angel to save the world, but one like us. In the gospels we see something of the physical and spiritual power of Christ.

Wed Jesus the Saviour is true man, He shared in our sufferings, he needed to pray like us. In that way we can see that the Saviour understands us completely and has compassion on us, because he has experienced human feelings.

Thur In the Church we are encouraging one another not to do wrong, not to be rebellious against God, not to harden our hearts against even an enemy. We need one another to help us keep good, just as Jews had priests as the guardians of medical purity, e.g. whether a leper could take his place again in the community. A greater disease than leprosy is sin and hatred.

Fri We must do all we can to reach our heavenly home otherwise we may not get there, just as the Israelites did not reach the Promised Land. However, we have the advantage, that if we have sinned, Jesus can forgive us so we can continue on our way.

Sat Jesus came not for the just but for sinners. Therefore we expect to find the riff raff in the Church. Jesus understands our temptations because he suffered temptations, too.

Week 2

Mon Today we can rejoice with the bridegroom., Christ is the high priest for us because God the Father has appointed him as such. He has also taken on all our troubles so that we need not go fasting and doing penance on our own. We know that his priestly sacrifice has saved us. Likewise, we know that this mass has already brought about our chance of salvation.

Tues Jesus is the high priest. We do not depend on doing the right ritual things of the Church to get to heaven. Not even keeping Sundays holy - as Jesus points out. God has made a promise with us through Christ. He is the one who saves us.

Wed Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath - his priesthood is not in virtue of laws, but unique, as God-man, he is for ever a priest. This office is much more important than human law can ever make, even holy laws.

Thur Christ, by his absolute obedience to and unity with the Father's will, has the greatest power possible. Against this even devils are powerless.

Fri Why does God call some and not others? He made a promise or covenant with the chosen people but because it was not a perfect one, he promised something better to come. Jesus made the new covenant with us and chose twelve apostles to be the foundation and teachers of it.

Sat Christ is the high priest who did not need to go to the sanctuary (or tent) to offer mere animals' blood but who offered himself. He offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins - yet some called him a devil or at least a mad man.

Mon Christ came to take away sin and sufferings not by the power of the devil (modern superstitious practices) but by offering his life as a perfect sacrifice just once.
The Mass is not a bit of magic but the self same sacrifice.

Tues How are we to make up for our sins? How be pleasing to God? In the past the only way was by offering him lots of gifts over and over again as the law prescribed. Now Christ has come and offered himself once for all as the perfect sacrifice. Because his will was completely at one with the Father. So we offer a perfect gift in the mass and try to make our wills one with God. That is what makes us acceptable.

Wed Jesus brought us the true teaching and sacrifice for sins - the new covenant or way of life. It is easy to miss it and not let it develop within us. But if we do let it, then it can produce a great harvest in us.

Thur Let us not be ashamed to be religious, let us not be afraid to offer help to one another.
Let us not hide our lights under a bushel.

Fri The kingdom of heaven - Christ's Church - will grow by the power of God. The letter to the Hebrews urges us to persevere, not to doubt the final outcome of God's plan for the world but, with faith, to cooperate with it to the full. 'Trust in the Lord ... commit your life to the Lord.' (Ps)

Sat Faith, is the theme today. Faith in God is what will save us and this is to trust his promises though we cannot see any logical reason to do so. Faith is the ultimate act of respect for a friend. The apostles should have had faith in Jesus. We should in God.

Week 4

Mon Today we think of the people who though they were not the chosen race had faith but did not gain the full reward of becoming member of the Church. First the men before Christ. Then, in the gospel, a man from a non Jewish background and town who was not even allowed by Jesus to become a close follower. How much happier are we to have Faith when we know we are chosen.

Tues Have Faith, don't let anything get in the way. Just as people who wished for a cure let nothing get in the way of Jesus' power. Jesus himself let nothing stop his work.

Wed Look on the positive side, always ready to give people a chance and you will be the one to gain. If people in Nazareth had been open to the possibility of one of their own having something to offer them, they would have gained so much.
If we do not let sufferings or snubs get in the way of our loving God, we will be the winners in the end.

Thur Christ brings in a new era and makes us all heirs of the kingdom and friends of the angels and saints. There is now no need for fear. As a sign of this, Jesus even gave his twelve power to preach, to heal and to drive out devils.

Fri John the Baptist was imprisoned for speaking against immoral conduct, and beheaded, due to immoral lust. The first reading urges us to act differently - morally, with the Lord as our light and our help. (Ps)

Sat Jesus told his apostles who were to be his leaders, that they needed rest, but when their flock called they must be ready to help them. We should try to make the lives of our leaders easier by loyal cooperation, by our good behaviour.

Week 5

Yr 1

Mon Today we think of God as creator of all things. Then we think of Jesus who had power to head. We are present today at a great miracle - the mass. Jesus is God. We are in God's hands.

Tues Today we continue to consider God as the creator. By bearing this in mind we are less likely to form him in our own image and likeness. This is always a danger, as with some of the Pharisees who forgot true worship, true religion. They made religion to suit themselves. Let us get things in the right perspective.

Wed God creates man and asks him to live according to the plan he has made for him. He doesn't impose arbitrary rules to test him. The fruit that wasn't to be eaten can signify that we must not think ourselves equal to God. Jesus, too, had to point out that keeping man-made rules aren't the main criteria of holiness, but whether our souls are in agreement with God's will.

Thur All people are equal in the sight of God. Even before Christ, the book of Genesis points out in a wonderful story that man and woman are equal. Jesus shows that, though we have obligations to members of our own Church first, anyone of any race or religion will be cared for by him.

Fri Priests perform the same miracles as Jesus in curing the dumb. Some, like Adam and Eve, are made dumb by being ashamed. They have their guilt locked up in them. Especially through the Sacrament of Penance can the Church loosen the tongues of those too ashamed to speak.

Sat Because we sin and don't do things God's way, we tend to muck up the world and make things difficult for ourselves. This is described in the story of Adam and Eve. Jesus has pity on us for the state we have got ourselves into and alleviates our immediate troubles by offering us harmony with each other and eternal life. This was expressed by his feeding the four thousand.

Week 6

Mon It is amazing that God does not lose patience with us. Jesus did feel a frustration with the Pharisees. The story of man is one of sin on sin right from the start. Yet God gives man a great protection as in the story of Cain, even as a sinner, and Jesus died for the Pharisees. This mass is proof of God's love for sinners.

Tues How blind we can be! The story of the flood is the human reaction of the author who sees sinfulness all around. He supposes that man has become so spiritually blind, even God cannot forgive him. Jesus, humanly did feel frustration at the blindness of his chosen apostles. We know that God never gives up on us.

Wed In the story of the flood, we learn that God, though he may appear to punish us, will never erase us from his loving memory and forgiveness. He does not want us to suffer but to learn faith in him. This may be through suffering. We see how Jesus elicited faith from the man cured of his blindness in stages.

Week 6 contd.

Yr 1

Thur God has a very one sided affair with us. The story of the flood tells this in a dramatic way. Man does not have to do much, but God is faithful in binding himself to please us. He fulfils this by sending his very Son. It is Peter who is enabled to recognise him as the Christ. Yet Peter was hardly the best person to be rewarded in this way.

Fri What does man gain to win the whole world and ruin his life? That is the question the loving Jesus puts to us. We see in the story of the tower of Babel how man has always put a great deal of effort into seeking things that do no lasting good, and some that are a waste of time altogether.

Week 6 contd.

Yr 1

Sat It is faith that saves us - total acceptance of God and that he is in charge of the world and us too. Jesus knew his apostles' faith was not all that strong and so he gave them (three of them at least), a boost to their faith. God gives us great helps to our faith in him too. Especially by the grace of the mass.

Week 7

Yr 1

Mon All wisdom and the power come from God because he is Lord and King (Ps). So the apostles couldn't cast out devils except through God's power which they obtained through prayer and fasting.

Tues It is often in times of crisis or trouble that we find out who our true friends are. The first reading urges us to trust in God now so that when these times come we will be upheld by him (cf Ps resp). Jesus speaks of his coming crisis and tells his apostles to be trusting like little children.

Wed We should rejoice that the wisdom and Power of God works where it will, not just in church-going Catholics for example. But anyone searching for true wisdom will receive the peace and grace of God.

Thur (Ps) 'Happy the man who trusts in the Lord.' But we are not to be presumptuous thinking, He will just overlook our behaviour so we can act to suit ourselves. Apart from lacking in charity we must be aware of giving scandal, as Jesus warns us very firmly,.

Fri Today we think about friendship from various aspects that do not particularly seem religious, and we go on from there to the deepest human relationship of marriage. God is actually in all relationships. He is the author of marriage.

Sat God has made each one of us like himself, he gives each a job to do. He gives each the ability to do it and keeps an eye on each one. That is why Jesus insisted that none, not even children, should be kept from him - we are all in his care. EP4

Week 8

Yr 1

Mon Make the most of the present time. Don't wait until it's too late before turning back to the Lord and praising him. Maybe for some this will mean giving up the things of this life to give themselves entirely to God here and now.

Tues We have come to offer sacrifices to God. He wants a good sacrifice based on a life in keeping with his commandments. Jesus promised that whatever we offer will be paid back a hundredfold.

Wed We all ask God for favours. How often do we ask for the right ones? We have examples, today, of a prayer for God's will to be done everywhere. We also have the example of selfish asking.

Thur Today we can look at the marvels of God's creation. But more marvellous still, even more than physical miracles, is the gift of Faith that he gives us. Preface IV.

Fri (Ps.) 'The Lord takes delight in his people'. He has done wonders in us and makes us wonderful. This is one reason why Jesus was so angry with the people who cheated pilgrims in the Temple. Possibly they turned their victims against religion, and took away some of their dignity. That is also why we must forgive everyone. Everyone is created good.

Sat If we search for God's wisdom, the writer of the first reading points out, we will find it. We have an example in the gospel, today, of how easy it is to fail to find wisdom through our own fault.

Week 9

Yr 1

Mon Ps. 'Happy the man who fears the Lord'. Fear means respect. Tobit was such a man and today we start his happy story, how he was rewarded. Jesus tells a parable looking for respect for himself as the Lord's son.

Tues People try to trap us into saying the wrong things. Tobit by his wife, who wanted him to cease thanking God for rewarding his goodness with disaster. Jesus by his enemies, who try to catch him out. In all things that we say we should still trust in the Lord (Ps).

Yr 1

Wed We think about dying. First we hear the prayers of two sad people who prayed to die. Second we think of life after death, the mystery of the resurrection of the body.

Thur The whole law of God is summed up in love of God and love of our neighbour. We have an example of true love in newly weds who put God and each other first, even on their wedding night.

Fri Tobit is cured and begins to realise that Raphael is something more than a human friend. He sees God's hand at work. We see how Jesus is someone more than an ordinary man. The Jews begin to realise this. The Christ is greater than King David even.

Sat The reward of true charity and alms-giving. God did see what Tobit did in secret. God did see the generous widow and praises her.

Week 10

Mon "Happy are those who suffer", Jesus said. At least we can take consolation that if we accept sufferings without them turning us from God, they can be used to heal others in God's work of bettering the world.

Tues God is straightforward with us. Neither he nor the official doctrines of the Church hedge their bets. We too should be straightforward with the world because they look to us for example.

Wed Our religion is based on belief, not in keeping rules and regulations of the Old Law, i.e. the law that the prophets wrote down were a help, as Jesus said. He did not say they were all wrong. But he came to perfect them. Love of God, not rules and regulations. (First reading - modern parallel - judge and priest. Former has great splendour but only hands out penalties, latter hands out life.)

Thur Our gospel should light up the world. Our good example e.g. of forgiveness should penetrate the hardest hearts. We must give no reason for others to blame anyone but themselves for not seeing Christ in us.

Fri Jesus set us a high standard of morality based on inner purity of heart. Today we think about our sexuality. If we think this is too difficult to cope with, we are reminded by St Paul that Jesus is living in us to give us the victory over ourselves.

Sat We are all completely in God's hands. So even when we swear to do something it is always with the understanding that God allows us to exist. In fact, we are a new creation since God has reconciled us to himself and we look to heaven, not to earth, for our support.

Week 11

Mon As Christians we are to set a good example. One way is in the way we react to those who wrong us. We should seek no more vengeance than was done against us - eye for eye only. And as Christians we should actually turn the other cheek.

Week 11 contd.

Yr 1

Tues 'To be Christian' is often equated with being charitable. St Paul asks his converts for funds to help the poorer Christians. Jesus asks us to be charitable even to those who do not like us.

(Ps.) The Lord looks after those in need - through us.

Wed Generosity should be the hallmark of a Christian. But this should be done without showing off.

Thur St Paul gently and with humour, encourages and chides the Corinthian Christians for letting him down. Jesus teaches us how to forgive others who wrong us. Pray for them, don't bear grudges.

Fri 'Don't store up treasures on earth but in heaven', said Jesus. St Paul tells us how hard he worked and how much he suffered, so as to win an eternal crown. How do we use this life and its riches?

Sat Don't worry about the things of this life as long as you are prepared for the next. Not even our failings and weaknesses need trouble us, because God can use precisely these, as he did with St Paul.

Week 12

Mon Today we read about the start of the chosen people. They were to be God's people by virtue of physical descent. We, God's people, are so by virtue of a spiritual bond. So we should not be so ready to judge our brothers and sisters but be spiritually aware of ourselves.

Tues God gives Abram the Promised Land. But life isn't always a bed of roses. Jesus tells us that only if we are appreciative (grateful for or generous with) of what he gives us in this life will we be rewarded with more in the next.

Wed The Lord made a covenant or solemn promise with Abram. This was done in the traditional manner of the time. It is a one sided agreement, with God giving everything. But he expects a rich harvest from what he puts in. He expects us to produce good fruit.

Thur Today we think about foundations. First, the foundation of the chosen race was from the true Israelite not the slave, though this tested Abram's faith. Secondly, Jesus tells us to build our religion on true foundations - a firm faith.

Fri Having made a solemn covenant with Abram, we see how God planned to bring this about through forming a people directly descended from him and his wife. The sign of circumcision would set them apart. Jesus, too, accepted the importance of the Jewish ways, as we see in him sending lepers to the priests.

Sat Who are the chosen people? At first it was important to be physically descended from Abraham. Later, Jesus said many would come from East and West to join in if they have faith.

Week 13

Mon We as believers must rely utterly on God, whether it is in the simplicity of children pleading for our needs, as Abraham did, or in the trustful willingness to give up everything to follow Christ.

Week 13 contd.

Yr 1

Tues God has total power over this world he creates. This is expressed in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and in the miracle of Christ calming the waves. He doesn't exercise this arbitrarily, but to teach us.

Wed Today we think of people who lived in the Promised Land but were not strictly the chosen race. We see how God also cares for them. First Abraham's son by the Egyptian slave girl. Secondly the Gadarenes on the other side of the sea of Galilee. Though some are given more in this life, God actually loves all people.

Week 13 contd.

Yr 1

Thur Faith is what God requires of his creatures. We hear of the great faith of Abraham and of the great faith of friends of the paralysed man.

Fri Whom did Jesus come for? On the one hand it is made very plain that God has a chosen race. On the other, Jesus mixed with traitors and sinners.

Sat God's ways are not necessarily our ways. He can choose to use for his plans, the cheat, such as Jacob. Jesus also tells us to examine our attitudes, they may have to be revised in the light of God's teachings.

Week 14

Mon There is a constant link between heaven and earth. God does care for us. Sometimes this is made more explicit by a vision or dream, sometimes by a miraculous curing.

Tues We have the strange story of Jacob wrestling with God. He was blessed in the sight of Gods and given a new name. Jesus knows that all men wish to be blessed by God and made into new men, even if they don't say so in those words. He prayed that more people would be apostles to them.

Wed We see how in the Old Testament God produced sorrow for a crime committed and forgiveness of it through one of the twelve sons sold into slavery by the others. We see in the New Testament how Jesus produced forgiveness of sins and freedom from the devil by his twelve apostles.

Thur The twelve are told to preach the good news, relying on God to provide. They had the example of the twelve sons of Jacob, looking for provisions. God provided for them a link with food through the sin they had committed. Even more then, should we trust God when we do his work properly.

Fri Life is a journey into the unknown, but we are in God's hands. If we rely on him and do what he says, he will make it an education and a fruitful one. He did this for Jacob's family in Egypt. He did this for his twelve apostles throughout the world.

Sat We see how Joseph, having been enslaved, spoke up for his God and was raised up to a position where he was able to help his guilty brothers. The Lord does reward anyone who speaks up for him. We are protected marvellously by him.

Week 15

Mon God's people expect difficulties. We expect to be hated, just as they were by the Egyptians. But 'our help is in the name of the Lord'. We shall win through by our charity.

Tues The coming of Moses and how he learned his authority. Jesus expected people to accept his authority and miracles or be damned.

Wed It is God who shows himself to whomever he chooses. He first revealed himself to Moses. He revealed himself more intimately through Jesus.

Thur Jesus tells us to come to him if we are in trouble. Who is he that he should make the difference? He is the Son of God who revealed his name to Moses as God who IS always and who IS all powerful.

Fri God gave Moses explicit instructions how they were to keep the first and subsequent Passover meals. However it is not just in keeping religious observances even exactly that we are brought close to God but by obeying Jesus.

Week 15 contd.

Yr 1

Sat Jesus came 'to lead the truth to victory', as we read in the gospel. Through the sacrifice of the Mass he leads us from slavery from sin to the freedom of God's sons. This was foreshadowed by the flight from Egypt which was remembered each year in the Passover meal. The Mass continues this remembrance.

Week 16

Yr 1

Mon The Israelites were given even greater proof of God's power by the unbelief of the Egyptians. Jesus criticised those who had seen his miracles and not believed.

Tues In the story of the Exodus we are not meant to believe that God loved the Israelites and hated the Egyptians. True, the former were his chosen people. No, as Jesus said, about his own family even, anyone who does the will of the Father can be his family.

Wed (Ps) 'The Lord gave them bread from heaven.' The way God feeds his people in the desert was to teach us that he alone can satisfy us. His words produce true contentment if we will only accept them. If we do we will produce great fruit even at the present time.

Week 16 contd.

Yr 1

Thur God speaks to us often through chosen mediators. Moses was one such, the apostles, the Church, another. This is so that we can have an authoritative voice. Crowds often hear only what they want to hear.,

Fri The Lord taught men the rules that they should already know in order to live together happily in this life to prepare for the next. They are basically ten in number. To the extent we listen to them and live by them we shall be truly human and holy. (Ps.) Lord, you have the message of eternal life.

Sat We celebrate in each mass the new covenant. The original one, sealed in blood, gave the people a rule of life. God gives everyone, good and bad, a chance to work together until the fulfilment of this covenant at the Last Day.

Week 17

Mon The kingdom of heaven is something that grows large from small starts. It spreads, just as evil can spread. The chosen people were lead astray by a growing dissatisfaction. They were also led to grow in goodness from one man's goodness and FAITH.

Tues God speaks to us sometimes directly, but authoritatively through others. E.g. Moses or his apostles. Today it is through his Church he speaks to the world explaining with certainty the things he wills for us.

Wed How can we explain the glory and wonder of heaven? The marvel of knowing God? Jesus uses the example of the great bargain, the great treasure. We also read about what happened to Moses when he was in God's presence. The mass is equally splendid, a great gift.

Thur Jesus tells us that the Church is a gathering of people who are to be holy and contains all types. It is symbolised by the Church building. This was prefigured by the portable tabernacle, Moses made in the desert.

Fri We are given feasts, as were the Israelites, so that we can keep God ever before our minds. Sometimes, however, we can be 'religious' without being aware of God. This happened in Jesus' own home town. They could not recognise whom they had been worshipping when he actually appeared.

Sat How do we keep celebrations? Are they things that bring us closer to God and our destiny or are they things that can lead us into sin? Today we think of Jewish Jubilees and Herod's banquet.

Week 18

Yr 1

Mon God feeds us and we complain. Even when we complain he still feeds us.

Tues Pride comes before the fall. No one should want to take honour to himself. Honour should all come from God and is given to whosoever he wishes to be used for the service to others.,

Wed We have two examples of differing attitudes. First God's chosen people who rejected what he offered and lost out in the end. Second an outsider who begged him for help and received it.

Thur God expects a greater degree of faith from his leaders. Moses, a good man, suffered either because of a slight lapse of faith at the rock, or on behalf of his people's lack of it. Peter was made into the rock because of his act of faith.

Fri Whom will we follow, God and his Christ or not? The question is put to us squarely. Choose, because judgment will be made on our choice.

Sat Reward for being religious. In the Old Testament it was thought that God would reward materially those who obeyed him. Jesus tells us that faith in him can work miracles.

Week 19

Mon God doesn't ask for much from us. We are not bound to pay a tax for his concern over us. All he wants is that we acknowledge him, and behave properly to one another.

Tues Entering the kingdom. The Israelites are promised a great earthly dwelling place. Jesus offers us heaven if we will only be humble before God.

Wed God has shared his power with men. First we see it in Moses, whom God knew face to face - the great law giver. Later Jesus gives his powers to his disciples when they work together with him.

Thur We should forgive one another, God not only forgives but heaps up good things on and aids the sinners. We see this in his dealings with his people whom he gives a new start and a new home to.

Fri God gives us everything. All the Israelites had, came from him and not their own hands. When we marry, this must be a sign of complete giving also, to reflect God's relationship with us. Otherwise give up even marriage for God.

Sat Joshua made a covenant between God and the people. They were to observe God's laws and he would look after them. Thereafter even the children were special to God, for though they could not obey or understand the laws, God had bound himself to the people.

Week 20

Mon The people failed to obey God but when they did they prospered under the Judges. Jesus sometimes asks more than just that we do what is right; he asks some to give up everything.

Tues Sometimes we doubt our abilities to achieve anything good let alone anything outstanding. However God chooses ordinary people, and if he supports them, as he did Gideon, as he did the apostles, then all things are possible for the poor or the rich.

Wed We should not be envious. The Israelites were envious of their neighbours who had glorious monarchs. Very well then, they would have them and learn that kings can be as choking as thorns. Jesus tells us not to be envious of God's generosity.

Week 20 contd.

Yr 1

Thur Doing God's will. Sometimes this is exceptionally hard. We have the extreme example of Jephthah and his crazy vow. Sometimes it is easy - as in Jesus' parable, by accepting God's invitation. That's enough.

Fri Love is the most important thing in the world, that which makes us most human and most like to God. We have an example of love between two women, real loyalty.

Sat We must make things easy for others so that they can love God and their neighbour without the laws getting in the way. We see how Boaz made things easy for Ruth - a foreigner, and how it turned out to everyone's satisfaction.

Week 21

Mon We will be condemned by Christ if we act as leaders and set a burden too great on those we instruct. The apostle Paul rejoices that his converts have continued the work he started in them.

Tues (Ps) The Lord searches and knows me. I hope to be like St Paul and can claim to have preached freely, not for my own sake but for my listeners. Are we like this or like the hypocritical Pharisees?

Wed St Paul treated his converts fairly. The Pharisees were often hypocritical. Do people look at us and see true Christians or does our treatment belie our words?

Thur Let us use our energy to do good, to love God and to love our neighbour. If only we had the zeal of St Paul who gained joy from the increase of faith and love in others. Let us be faithful and wise servants.

Fri We should live for the present moment. This time, now, is God's time. Not, 'ours today, God's tomorrow'. Our bodies, for example, are God's not ours alone. Likewise others bodies and emotions are God's not ours to play with selfishly.

Sat The Lord gives us the ability we have and he expects us to use it. St Paul tells his listeners that they are to use their abilities. First their ability to love their neighbours then to carry on working setting an example to others.

Week 22

Mon Who will be acceptable to God? Jesus wasn't accepted by his own people and points out that outsiders have more chance when they try to repent. St Paul speaks about those accepted at the Last Day.

Tues Jesus teaches us with authority. He has the power over any spirits. Therefore we need not turn to superstition, fortune telling, horoscopes etc, as St Paul points out, but live as God's children now. That is all we need to know.

Wed Jesus was sent to tell the people the good news and we see today, how it quickly spread through people like St Paul and just how good it is. A real subject for rejoicing.

Thur We thank God that he has transformed our lives by taking us out of our emptiness to a full life. This, however, does mean being ready to give up our normal way of life like the apostles did their fishing.

Fri Today we praise and worship Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. Paul writes a hymn of praise. Even Jesus spoke to himself occasionally in glowing terms.

Sat Jesus came to create a new order of things. We are free to worship God now, not just by keeping the rules but with our hearts. This is the good news St Paul speaks about. A real religion!

Week 23

Mon To tell the good news of the mysteries of God and his plan for us is a hard job. Jesus was plotted against, St Paul speaks of his hard life. In God is my safety (Ps)

Week 23 contd.

Yr 1

Tues Christianity is something over and above the natural order of things. We are not just made good people - i.e. obedient to rules and common sense. No, Jesus has given us a new nature. He left a Church founded on apostles which is a super-natural body.

Wed Being a Christian is not a natural way of life but a supernatural one. Here nature is in harmony with our highest aspirations. It means accepting God's ultimate plan for ourselves and turning our back on what even our friends may find acceptable in sexual or financial fulfilment.

Thur How should we behave to one another? Today we are given a clear Christian approach. Do we measure up to it?

Fri We are called to be apostles no matter how bad we may have been once. However, first we have to examine ourselves, to be aware of our bad habits before we try to instruct others.

Sat Do we have a contradiction today? St Paul says he was the worst sinner yet becomes a saint. Jesus says you cannot get good fruit from bad trees. The answer Our Lord gives, is that if we really listen to him, then we can have a complete change of heart by the power of his grace.

Week 24

Mon We should pray earnestly for each other. Jesus was impressed by the faith in the prayer of a pagan and granted his request. How much more will he listen to the prayers of us, his brothers and sisters!

Tues Those with a special office in the Church should be of impeccable character. Then people can look to them, give glory to God and say, as they did of Our Lord - "a great prophet has appeared among us." cf Ps.

Wed People want all kinds of things from religion, they are never satisfied. They want social workers, cheerful liturgies, Latin masses, active priests, quiet priests etc etc. St Paul reminds us that our religion is fundamentally about the truth of Christ Jesus.

Thur Today's theme is about self respect. We should respect ourselves for the job God has given us and not for the riches or high standing we may have in the world. Thus the Bishop Timothy, though young, should have faith in his office. The humble prostitute taught the society people a lesson.

Fri Religion brings its own rewards far greater than wealth can give, though Jesus was supported financially.

Sat We have a duty to be faithful. Paul says to Timothy that before God he has to be good. Jesus explains how his teachings can bear fruit only in receptive people.

Week 25

Mon The Israelites were given this marvellous chance to start again. Miraculously they are set free by a kindly conqueror. Yet they failed in the end. Jesus reminds us, we too must take our opportunity to shine before others.

Week 25 contd.

Yr 1

Tues We are good at obeying commands if they suit us. Today we have the example of a very kind decree which the Israelites were delighted to obey. Jesus says that anyone who obeys him is his true relative.

Wed God gave back a home to the Jews. They were grateful. He expects us to give a home to those who preach in his name.

Thur Today we read how Jews were told to show gratitude for what God had given them by using some of their wealth to build a Temple. Years later a wealthy Herod Antipas, whose father rebuilt the Temple, is anxious to see Jesus, not realising Jesus is even greater than the Temple.

Fri Do not judge by appearances. Though the returned exiles could only see the ruins of the First Temple God promised to fill the new one with great glory. The new prophet, Jesus, was he as glorious as the old ones? In fact he was the glory of God himself.

Sat We have today a prophetic vision of the glory that was to be Jerusalem's. But eventually even that was destroyed. Likewise they admired Jesus, but he prophesied his destruction. All earthly glory passes.

Week 26

Mon (Gosp) "The least among you is the greatest." God raises up the lowly just as he raised up the captive Israelites and miraculously rebuilt Jerusalem and the whole nation. They found it hard to believe when they were in a foreign land. Do we also find it hard to believe that God is on our side when we seem to be so ineffective and surrounded by people with a mentality foreign to Christianity?

Tues Going up to Jerusalem. Zechariah had prophesied a golden age when many people from all races would worship the true God in his Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was one of them. Today this prophecy is fulfilled in his Church.

Wed Jesus says we should be willing to give up home and relatives to follow him if needs be. We naturally have a desire for our own homeland, as did Nehemiah, and God, who gave us a family in the first place, knows this.

Thur God has always sent out people to proclaim the good news. It is good news. The reading of God's law, rules and regulations was a matter of great rejoicing. (Ps)

Fri Some people faced up to their past evil ways and were reconciled to God. Jesus is sad for those who refuse to do so.

Sat We belong to God, he never leaves us, although we may get lost and be misled or get hurt. Baruch prophesies this for the people lost in captivity. Jesus rejoiced that his simple followers started to see this, too.

Week 27

Mon Today is really about the outsider and how he is as worthy as the Christian in God's eyes. Speaking of Jews we have Jonah's refusal to preach to the pagan Ninevites. We have Jesus using the heretical Samaritans as bad guys, who were as worthy as Jews in the eyes of God.

Tues The thing most important in life is to realise for what we were made. The Ninevites came to realise this and turned over a new leaf,. May be Mary and Martha teach us this lesson too.

Wed Are we indignant that evil does seem to be so easily forgiven? Jonah was. God explained to him his mercy and compassion (Ps). Jesus tells us to pray for forgiveness for ourselves as we forgive others.

Week 27 contd.

Yr 1

Thur We sometimes think God is unjust because the evil-doer seems to get away with it. But a day of reckoning will come. We should trust God enough, in fact, to ask him for everything because he is actually more just than an earthly father.

Fri Today we can think of the dreadfulness of sin. We should face up to the power of the devil and the judgment we will all have to face. God is a just judge (Ps).

Sat Today we have Joel's prophecy that God would save his people from their enemies all around them. This would bring a time of great rejoicing and euphoria. But we should not get carried away. To be one of his people is not enough. To hear his word and keep it brings even greater happiness.

Week 28

Mon The good news is preached to all nations. (Ps) The Lord has made known his salvation. So woe betide anyone of us who refuses to listen properly.

Tues Man can be very silly, and wilfully so. He can turn from what he knows to be good and right until he actually believes in his sinful ways. He can be really hypocritical, thinking that legalism will justify him.

Wed The dangers of hypocrisy. But God is our ultimate judge. He chose us to be his people. We take pride in that but are not smug.

Thur The law we should follow is the law of Faith. Anyone can then keep God's law if he believes. We Christians should not make our laws put off non Christians.

Fri God looks right into the hearts and minds. He knows our motives. He does not judge by what we do but whether we love and believe in him.

Sat It is by believing in God, not by obeying rules, that we please him. If we declare ourselves publicly for God, he will do the same for us.

Week 29

Mon What is necessary to lead sensible religious lives? Faith, hope and charity. Abraham had faith. Jesus tells us a parable about charity in order that we have hope in God, not just hope in wealth.

Tues How good Jesus is to us! All we have to do is be waiting for him and he will wait on us as a servant. We can be sure of this because he has already taken Adam's sin away by dying for us.

Wed The Lord has given us a great deal into our charge and expects a report on our stewardship, e.g. our bodies, emotions, sexuality etc. He gives us real responsibility for this which sets us free, but not the freedom to do wrong with it.

Thur Today we can think of various tensions which exist or may exist in our lives., there is the tension between good and evil in our desires. Jesus says he didn't come to bring us an easy life. Following him, however, may cause tensions, even between the closest relations.

Fri A good conscience is the ability to make a right judgment about how we are to behave. There is always a battle going on between what we know to be right and what we want to do. (St Paul) Jesus tells us it's a pity we don't use our intelligence to make right moral judgments.

Sat God sent his spirit into the world and he expects us to please him with good fruit. Being interested in worldly things does not make us pleasing to God. However, we cannot assume that those who suffer are being punished for being less pleasing than we are.

Week 30

Yr 1

Mon We have the Holy Spirit in us making us children of God. No more are we slaves of the law. We are therefore more important than even the observance of the most religious of laws. Man comes before religion, because God is our Father.

Tues Our lives must be ones of hope. We wait for the growth of the kingdom of God like the sower or the cook. We also wait with some distress for our own arrival in the kingdom.

Wed God chose us long ago to become like his Son, but we cannot just rely on belonging to the true Faith.

He chose many from East and West and they may be closer to him than we are, if we aren't careful.

Thur Jesus was aware of plots against himself and troubles in store for the Jewish race. No matter what troubles come, we can be sure, as St Paul tells us, that nothing can come between us and the love of God.

Week 30 contd.

Yr 1

Fri Jesus was met by obstinate silence, sometimes from the very people chosen by God to be first. St Paul would do anything to help them.

We often feel the same sorrow and helplessness in front of Christians who refuse Christ.

Sat God raises some to prominence as he wills. He does not reject the people who fall from the right course. But because he exalts us Christians, this does not mean he forgets the Jews.

Week 31

Mon God invites the poorest, weakest people to his Church. We cannot understand His choice. Just as we cannot judge the behaviour of his original chosen people. His mercy and regard for the sinner is unearthly.

Tues Jesus wants everyone of all races, nations and types to come to his banquet and he gives each their own abilities to be used for the service of all.

Wed Jesus tells us to take stock of our lives. What do we really want from life. Then make a rule of life for ourselves. It should be based on the law of love.

Thur We should not judge one another. Only God can do that and in any case we should rejoice, as he does at the conversion of the sinner.

Fri We should use our natural abilities in God's service.

St Paul claimed to have done this amongst the pagans. Where do I use my abilities?

Sat Friendship. We hear Paul's greetings to friends made in Christ.

Jesus says we should use our wealth to make true friends, i.e. in Christ.

Week 32

Mon 'Lead me, O Lord, in the path of life eternal.' (Ps) Today we are given advice for this path, by the author of the book of Wisdom and by Jesus himself. They teach us how to live wisely.

Tues Jesus says we should not expect a reward for doing what is merely our duty. Yet we know that God does reward us for virtue, certainly after death.

Wed Kings and rulers have a job to do (Priests, as holders of the Jewish law, had a job to do.) But God is not impressed by titles or earthly authority.

It was the humble and thankful heretic whom the Lord commended.

Week 32 contd.

Yr 1

Thur Wisdom comes from God and leads us to him. This is not the same as knowledge. In fact Jesus says we do not have to know all things to be holy, e.g. not even about heaven.

Fri We should use our brains. First to recognise God by the beauty of things around us. Secondly to prepare to meet him at the end of our time on earth.

Sat Never give up praying and imploring heaven. God will see justice done to us, and will work miracles. He did work miracles for his people, bringing them out of Egyptian bondage.

Week 33

Mon Today we start the books of Maccabees which is about how the Jews were blinded by the paganism of their masters. Yet some stood up for the faith. Jesus heals the blind man, because of his faith.

Tues We read the story of Eleazar to encourage us to be faithful to our Faith. We read also of Zacchaeus to give us further encouragement, if we have already fallen.

Wed God will reward us for our faithfulness in big or little things. Today we are given the example of the family who believed this sufficiently to face the ultimate test.

Thur Persecutions will come but we should stand firm in our faith even giving up everything for it. So often one gives in to oneself for a time and still loses everything, as happened to Jerusalem.

Fri Respect for the Temple. We praise the Lord's glorious name (Ps). This should be the source of our joy.

Sat Often we do not understand the things of God because we are too earthbound. The Sadducees could not believe in life after death because they took a narrowly earthly view, which raised problems in their minds. Sometimes it is in fact only earthly failure that makes us understand God, as it was for Antiochus.

Week 34

Mon The last week of the Church's year. We come to the latest times of the Old Testament in the book of Daniel. We are encouraged by the stand taken by Daniel and his companions. We are encouraged by the poor widow Jesus praised.

Tues Great buildings and peoples will all come down to dust. We should heed the message that destruction teaches us to look forward only to what is permanent - the kingdom of God.

Wed We should be ready to speak up for God at the most unlikely times. Daniel, the slave, was called to prophecy against the king. Jesus says that when our time comes he will speak through us. So let us not lose our nerve.

Thur Today we think of distress and sorrow caused by persecutions and wars etc. But the man who trusts in God will come through unscathed, certainly in the next life, sometimes in this one.

Fri We hear Daniel's prophecy about the coming of Christ and his reign on earth. We hear Jesus himself saying it is soon to start.

Sat Today, the last of the Church's year, we read about the times ahead. Vague as the prophecy was, yet it agreed with Jesus' prophecy of a difficult life. In spite of this we should have confidence in God.

ONE THEME EACH WEEKDAY MASS
YEAR 2

Week 1

Mon Today we think of how God calls some people specially to do his work. We have the call of the Apostles. We hear the prelude to the call of Samuel - his unexpected birth of good parents who regularly sacrificed to the Lord.

Tues Today we read how Jesus taught and acted with authority and power. We know this was the power of God made man. We should not be surprised, then, that he has the power to change hearts and work miracles since God has always done so. Instance the marvellous conception of Samuel by Hannah. The Psalm is her prayer of thanksgiving similar to Our Lady's, centuries later.

Wed Jesus was much in demand. He came to serve and teach. Samuel, likewise, was called by God and he was ready and waiting. If WE could only say, as we do in the psalm, 'Behold, Lord, I come to do your will!'

Thur The Israelites saw their sins as the cause of their sufferings. Merely turning to pious customs - use of the Ark of the Covenant - was not sufficient to save them. Jesus cured the evils of leprosy in order to lead people to a true religion - of the heart.

Fri The Israelites wanted to be like the pagan nations around them and have a monarchy and the nationalism that goes with it. They no longer wanted to rely on God ruling them through the priests, prophets or judges.

We, whilst having political leaders, must be careful to recognise the authority of God.
NB none of the political leader can forgive sins as Jesus claimed to do.

Sat Today we read about the call of two men.

The first a fine man, to be king (who lost favour with God) the second a traitor, to be an apostle.

Week 2

Mon The Lord gives us a great deal. He expects us to enjoy ourselves and be happy with him the bridegroom. But for our sakes and for our salvation he expects us to recognise him and therefore to obey him. This is more important than sacrifices, as Saul found out to his cost.

Tues The Lord, is Lord of the Sabbath. God is in charge and can choose whom he wishes, e.g. He dismissed Saul and chose the very young David. We should not be surprised at changes, then, in Church rules.

We should always look deeper to see God who is above even religion.

Wed Today we hear how the boy David went against all the laws of common sense in battle and still overcame the Philistines by the power of God. We hear how Jesus, by the power of God, overcame sickness, seemingly outside the laws of science and religion.

Thur Today we think: of those whom we trust, those we fear; of jealousy and cupboard love; of true friendship. We have the strange triangular relationship of David, Jonathan and Saul. We have Jesus, the crowds to be cured and the unclean spirits.

Fri The people God chooses for a special task and appoints should be treated with respect because of the God who appoints them. Thus David respected Saul. We respect the Apostles.

Sat Today we see something of the humanity of Jesus and his relations. We first hear about his predecessor King David and his human reaction to the death of his son Jonathan. We are reminded that God created us in his likeness with feelings.

Week 3

Yr 2

Mon Jesus overcame the devil to capture our hearts. Just as God overcame Jerusalem for King David so he could capture it to make it the capital of Israel.

Tues We can think of God having a special dwelling place in the church - there have always been holy places where men find God, as king David knew. We can also think of him dwelling in anyone who does his will.

Wed God wanted to teach King David that God doesn't need a magnificent place to dwell with his people. Enough that he promised to remain in them and their descendants. He dwells in the hearts and minds of all who accept him and the words he has sown in them.

Thur The Lord has given us many gifts and he expects us to use them. We are not to hide our lights under the bed. He gave the Chosen People the promise of his continued presence and favour and expected them to respond. Just as he expects us to respond to his continuous gift of himself to us, the Church.

Fri Today we hear the start of the sad but beautiful account of King David and Bathsheba. He sinned, yet through his repentance, his family prospered. We hear also Jesus' parables describing how the Church will prosper not by our doing, but by the power of God.

Sat We continue the account of David and Bathsheba and see how he learnt repentance for his sins. We see too, how the apostles learnt the power of Jesus, slowly recognising him as something other than a mere man.

Week 4

Mon David is in the deepest trouble, his own son is causing him to flee and he is being cursed for his past deeds. We sometimes feel everyone is against us, and God is, maybe punishing us. Yet we read today how Jesus came to cure even the heretical Gerasenes of the demons within them.

Week 4 contd.

Yr 2

Tues We see David in the depths of sorrow, his beloved son who plotted against him is killed. We see Jesus relieving sorrow in two separate incidents today

Wed We can compare the Faith of David with the lack of Faith of some of Jesus' contemporaries. Though David had sinned through pride, he trusted in the Lord's forgiveness that he would be lenient. Jesus found opposition to his message from his nearest neighbours.

Thur Should our religion be firmly established with buildings, acceptance by society etc? David rejoices that his religion was secure in his family line because God promised it. Jesus, however, tells the apostles to rely on no earthly goods.

Fri Today we hear about two people specially chosen to prepare the people for the Lord. David was an official, a political leader. John the Baptist was very unofficial, a spiritual leader. We need to prepare for the Lord in all areas of our lives, giving praise by all we do.

Sat Jesus trained his apostles by taking them off quietly sometimes. Solomon had also asked for instruction and got that and more besides.

Week 5

Mon How holy and powerful God is! His presence was represented in the old days by the Ark of the Covenant which was properly housed in Solomon's Temple. But Jesus is the holy of holies as we read in today's gospel.

Week 5 contd.

Yr 2

Tues We have come to this church to worship God, (Ent. Ant.), the place like Solomon's Temple has a special significance, But Jesus reminds us that piety or religion alone is not sufficient. We must worship God all day long in our hearts and actions.

Wed You cannot judge people by their external behaviour whether it appears religious or not. It is what is within that matters. 'The just man's mouth utters wisdom' (Ps) We see how the fame of the inner wisdom of Solomon resulted in external riches, not vice versa.

Thur How should we behave to non-believers? We have to be careful in keeping our own faith uncontaminated by false ideas. Solomon was led astray and we see the consequences. But we also see how much faith there can be in people who do not have our belief, as is shown by the Syrophenician woman.

Fri (Ps) 'I am the Lord, listen to my warning'. Because Solomon did not listen, his kingdom was divided and eventually captured. (Samaritans). Jesus unblocked the deaf man's ears, a sign of the importance of listening to him.

Week 5 contd.

Yr 2

Sat Those in authority should feed their charges with right food. The rival king of the Northern territories set up a rival and false religion. Jesus, on the other hand, fed his people miraculously, a sign of the food of life, he came to bring.

Week 6

Mon St. James tells us we need to ask God for Faith and Wisdom. The Pharisees asked for neither, but proof, to justify their lack of faith.

Tues God only gives good, he does not send evil. We should open our eyes to his goodness then try to understand why evil comes.

Wed Jesus taught the blind man to deepen his faith by curing him bit by bit. Likewise we have to try bit by bit to be more patient with others by controlling our tongues and our anger.

Thurs What do we think of people? Who do we think Jesus is? Who do we think his brothers and sisters are? Do we judge them all by their wealth or position?

Fri If we truly have faith we must show it by our actions. First we must not be ashamed to admit our belief in Christ. Secondly we must care for each other, - this may be quite a cross sometimes.

Sat The tongues. We see in the account of the Transfiguration how the apostles did not know what to say, how they discussed what Jesus said. St. James shows us the importance of what we say, what we discuss. The tongue can be used, our ability to speak, for good or for evil.

Week 7

Mon Peace does not just happen it needs (a) a desire to put myself second, (b) prayer and reflection. Jesus brought peace to the man possessed. The envious scribes only brought argument.

Tues Jesus and James ask us not to argue over our ambitions. If we want worldly success this will lead to jealousy and hatred. We should entrust ourselves to God (Ps).

Wed 'Happy the poor in spirit' (Ps) This means realising that we are so completely God's that we can never be sure of success from our own arrangements alone. Further still, we should not pride ourselves on our own religious efforts. Even the non-Christians are in God's hands, they can be his instruments, unawares.

Thur Beware of wealth. We can have comfort now and pain hereafter. We should use it to help others and not put an obstacle in their way by our greed and evil. The gospel reminds us to beware of statues!

Fri Living together. We are taught the importance of putting up with others faults and especially to show unity within marriage.

Sat The humility that prayer brings. It leads us to accepting God as children do and the ability to say sorry. It is as powerful as in the cry of a child.

Week 8

Mon Eternal life is the aim of our earthly life. We must expect trials as the way (Eph) and be prepared to give up everything for it (.Gosp.). But we wait joyfully.

Tues Mankind has waited and longed for the truth. Now it is available. So we should unclutter our minds so we can receive it. Jesus promised that if we do we will be rewarded even in this world.

Wed The relationship between this world and the world of the spirit. As we have received a new birth from God we must try to live according to the divine plan. We should not cling to this life at all costs as the apostles tried, but be ready for the next like Jesus.

Thur We are a special people, chosen and consecrated. Our eyes should then be open, like Bartimaeus, who had faith.

Fri We are stewards of God's graces. We should bear fruit, unlike the fig tree that Jesus cursed. We should use our gifts for others, unlike the marketeers whom Jesus turned out of the Temple.

Sat We should ask questions, we should correct others. But we need to be honest with ourselves and sincere.

Week 9

Mon In the gospel we see how God has sent many messengers to tell us of the good news. He sent his Son. Now, as St Peter writes, it is up to us to use the gifts he has brought with him.

Tues We have been given gifts of this world and gifts of the next. We must use them for good in this world and to prepare us for the next. We are warned not to be led astray into using things just for this world as many would urge us to do.

Wed God's grace is a really powerful gift to us so we should use it and not lose confidence in our feelings. Nor should we lose heart because of seeming difficulties in our belief. If we do not understand, if the teaching is hard, God's grace will make things clear if we dig a little deeper into our faith and into our resources.

Thur The most important commandment is to love God completely (and our neighbour as ourselves). The good news is that if we do this he will never disown us. He is always faithful to us (cf Ps v.3).

Fri 'The lovers of God's law have great peace.' (Ps) If we try to understand the scriptures as Jesus shows in today's gospel, we will be delighted. St Paul was at peace in spite of persecutions, because he understood the scriptures.

Sat 'My lips will tell of your justice.' (Ps) St Paul urges Timothy, whom he appointed, to speak up for the truth. Jesus warns us that we must preach not only by words which can be hypocritical but by silent actions, as was that of the poor widow.

Week 10

Yr 1

Mon Some think of fasting as strange, to go without as ridiculous. Jesus sets out the beatitudes which seem strange to us. It all points, as Elijah showed, to the belief that ultimately God rules the world. We reflect on this in the Psalm.

Tues 'You are the light of the world.' We are to be the encouragement for those around us, even if it is very strange company we keep such as the prophet Elijah found when he helped and impressed the foreign widow.

Wed Jesus said he came to change nothing. This must mean nothing of substance. Elijah made the people face the decision to choose God or gods. It is the same decision that Jesus makes us face.

Thur God shows how he forgives us and wants to be friends. In Elijah's time, He stopped the drought (a result of sin?). He wants us to be equally forgiving.

Fri Our religion is not only exterior but stems from an interior relationship with God. Thus Elijah met God, not in the storm but in the gentle breeze. Likewise Jesus says we do not only sin by our actions but by what is in our hearts, too.

Sat We belong entirely to God. So Elisha 'burns his boats', gives everything back to God in order to follow his prophet. Jesus says, don't make promises or swear by what doesn't belong to you or over which you have no control. We ask now for God's forgiveness for acting as though WE owned the world, or worse still for acting as though we owned God.

Week 11

Mon God alone can give reward that is sure and everlasting. In life we may well be cheated, robbed and even killed. Ideally when we are wronged we should not seek revenge since God will hear the groanings we make and give us our due. Don't be jealous of your property, that's not Christian.

Tues It seems that time and again even the worst people, the greediest, the murderer, as long as he repented, would be let off God's punishment at least in his life time. In other words, God wants not the punishment of evil people but their conversion. That's why Jesus tells us to love our enemies. We shall want their conversion not our revenge.

Week 11 contd.

Yr 2

Wed We all have gifts from God, the Holy Spirit works in each one making us kind, or wise or patient with others, or good organisers etc. But if we have the ability to do some good, it is not for us to boast about, since it comes from God. Just as Elisha got his gift from God not from Elijah. Take courage in your abilities but don't pat yourselves on the back - For our pride we ask forgiveness. (Pref. 5)

Thur Today we have part of a long prayer or speech, praising God for all he had done for his chosen people throughout history. The passage for Ecclus. Today is about the prophets we read about yesterday. The Psalm, likewise, praises God. In the gospel Jesus tells us that our prayers don't need to be long like that, as our Father knows our needs anyway.

We come together for this short mass to pray in the way he and his Church have taught us.

Week 11 contd.

Yr 2

Fri Where is your treasure? What is your priority in life? Comfort, power, popularity, possessions? It should be the Lord and to do his will. Anything else, as we know, leads people into doing terrible things to get a short lived pleasure, as happened to an ambitious woman we hear about today.

Sat What is this life about? We worry and work to achieve certain things and who knows when we are going to die and leave it all. Or who knows if it will be taken from us. Only one thing is worth striving for and this is to love God. Our forefathers in the Faith, the Israelites, didn't seem to learn. Will we? But God is faithful (Psalm)

Week 12

Yr 1

Mon Religious differences lead to political weakness. 750 years before Christ, the Northern kingdom of Israel (the forerunner of the Samaritans) went into heresy and worshipped false gods. Eventually they were destroyed, as the prophets had foretold they would be, for lack of true religion. We have to be careful about rubbing our hands at the downfall of wrong-minded or evil people. First we have to look at our own faults.

Tues The chosen race were not Christians, they were still immature in religious beliefs treating God as a sort of 'sugar daddy'. When surrounded by an hostile enemy, they sought God's help. They saw God's hand in the defeat of their enemies. In today's example it was, archaeologists think, a plague of mice. Christ taught a more mature way of seeing God. We should not ask for suffering for our enemies, but that they be treated as we would like to be treated. God is father of ALL.

Wed The chosen people had been going through a bad patch and behaving in a very unholy way. Just as the world is today. This was the fruits of bad prophets and bad leaders just as today's ills are the result of evil doctrines from irreligious people. They tried to turn over a new leaf but were in the dark. We are often at a loss as to what present to give a friend. We are glad when they give us a hint. Well today we hear how they found the book of the law and how pleased they were to know what path to take to please God. We do have Our Lord's teachings in the Church and should be happy to follow them to please God. We say sorry for ignoring or disobeying the way he sets out for us.

Thur If we don't have a firm foundation whatever we do will be sure to crumble under pressure. Even God's favourite people who had everything going for them. They had the one place in the whole world where true sacrifice could be offered. Their foundation was weak so they were destroyed and led into captivity. Ours must be an inner one - deep love of Jesus. Where is our true desire, to please God or to please ourselves?

Fri Yesterday we saw how, because of their evil ways, the people of Jerusalem were overrun by the Babylonians, the able men were deported and a puppet king set up. Well they still didn't learn, or listen to what God told them through their prophets and through the law. Today we hear the consequences of that. All they and we need to do is what the leper in today's gospel did - trust in God and ask for healing. N.B. Though Jesus realised his own importance, he still showed respect for the Jewish priests and law.

Sat How often Jesus rewarded a little bit of faith. How much more did he reward a great deal of faith and this can be from the least likely source whilst those who should know better turn from him and rely on themselves. The utter desolation of this lack of Christ was foreshadowed by the Lamentations of Jeremiah - the desolation of the exiles in captivity. If we think that's bad, what must it be to be without God!

Week 13

Mon Here we have some sharp teaching. First there will be a day of reckoning when men will be judged for the wrong they have done. Secondly Jesus tells us to make up our minds to follow him wholeheartedly or not. No half measures.

Tues We listen to experts or those who can prove what they say. The prophet Amos was concerned to convince his listeners to repent. But it was hard to convince them that he spoke with God's authority. Jesus had less of a problem because of his miracles, e.g. his calming of the storm. Yet his listeners were still slow to understand. Let us listen today and believe.

Wed We often put on an act, maybe acting religiously whilst being very unchristian. Maybe appearing hard and worldly wise whilst having a good heart. Maybe turning to superstitious practices pretending that this is a great experience. Jesus came to set us free, i.e. be ourselves without pretence. True religion is being just, good and honest, but some people, even religious people would rather the pretence, and are frightened by a really good man as were the people we read about in today's gospel.

Week 13 contd.

Yr 2

Thur The person who speaks up for the Faith, who speaks for the truth or who does good, will be put down by others including by those in authority, who should know better, especially if they feel that their toes are being trodden on. So Amos, the simple shepherd turned prophet, was put down by the high priest. So Christ, when he forgave sins was put down by the educated scribes. Have you ever been put down for doing or saying the truth? Have you ever put anyone else down when they have shamed you by their goodness?

Fri Not uncommonly many of the diseases or reasons why we turn to a doctor are caused by our own self or the sins of others, e.g. misusing our bodies with alcohol, accidents due to dangerous driving, poverty caused by others greed etc. etc. We all need the healing of Christ. There is a lack of spiritual health in the world caused by my sins and others sins. Hence the thirst for the healing of Christ among so many people who search for the truth, for God, for Christ under whatever name they know, even while they wallow in sin.

Just as we may look to the doctor for a cure though we may not always take his good advice.

Sat Today's theme is joyful because God has renewed the world. The past day's readings have been gloomy, warning us against sin. But the promise was for a new order - represented by an agricultural and political miracle. Christ fulfilled his promise by bringing in a new era. We live A.D. in the year of the Lord. There is joy and hope and even peace. Christ has made us a new people able to look forward with confidence. Pref. 2

Week 14

Mon The compassion of God. Any parent knows and cares for their sick child or mourns for a dead one. God cares for us when we are sick with sin or even dead from rejecting him. Jesus shows this by healing even those who stretch out to him in faith. He even raises those who are dead. With confidence, then we can ask our loving Father's forgiveness.

Tues Today we hear some harsh words again. This time they are uttered against the rebellious Northern Kingdom of Samaria which broke away from the true religion and set up idolatrous practices. They would be punished by so weakening themselves that they would be led away captive. Jesus, when he came, saw that it was the weakness of the people and their leaders that led them astray. He took pity on them and healed them. He asks us likewise to be apostles to those who have been led astray around us, especially the poor, the inadequate and the 'sinner'.

Wed Today we see how Samaria brought about its own downfall by breaking away from the rest of Israel and turning to a false religion. God, however, offers even these, 'heretics' a way forward if they would improve. When Jesus set about rectifying the situation he clearly and firmly made a strong foundation in his chosen people who had remained faithful. He sets up his named apostles as the true religion who would first preach to the Jews to try to strengthen them. Later from its strength, the Church would turn to Samaria and the whole world.

Thur There is a certain childlike straightforwardness with which Jesus spoke and acted. He had such confidence in his message that he sends his apostles out expecting them to succeed and not requiring anything except reliance on the power of his message. Long before, God had shown that he treats his people as a father treats a child. You cannot be cross with a child for long. As children, then, we can ask for our Father's forgiveness, especially for failing to trust him and the power of his Church's message.

Fri God always keeps his promises. We see today how he promised forgiveness to Israel and prosperity too, even whilst they were worshipping false idols and trusting in their own cavalry etc. rather than in him. We see this overwhelmingly fulfilled by Jesus who sends his apostles to the towns of Israel and promised he would arrive in their hearts even though they would do atrocious things. God's promise extends to this age when in spite of the wicked things being done, one can find proof of his care, even before we all are repentant.

Week 14 contd.

Yr 2

Sat Have confidence in yourself because no matter how inadequate you feel, any good that you might do will come from God anyway. Isaiah felt quite unable to be a prophet but because he was willing to do God's work God spoke through him. Likewise Jesus promised he would speak and work through us even though others may mock us or persecute us. God works through very blunt instruments and very silly looking instruments as long as we acknowledge him and don't lose confidence.

Week 15

Mon Startling words today that make us re-examine our attitude to religion. First, God says he doesn't want all those sacrifices, he doesn't want us to come to Mass every day - if we don't change our ways. Secondly, Jesus stirs us up and says we will have to make some harsh decisions. Are we for him wholeheartedly even if this upsets our families? And again, true religion isn't coming regularly to church but giving a cup of water to someone in his name. (At the offertory, the priest prays that the sacrifice will be accepted by God.)

Tues Recently a great movable barrier has been built at Woolwich to prevent London being flooded. Yet with all the nuclear weapons about, a city could easily be destroyed and we see how great cities in the past have sunk into oblivion. The only way of guaranteeing our final safety is not by trusting in one's own defences but by sticking to God.

Wed Today we think of the ever present problem of trying to understand God's will. Why does he allow evil things to befall us? Does he inflict it as a punishment in this life for our sins? Isaiah has one interpretation and sees Israel's enemies as agents of God. When the 'punishment' is obviously too severe, he says it's not God's will but his agents getting out of hand. This is a crude way of looking at God's will. Ultimately we do not know the answers. Jesus says, only those docile to God will understand, as far as anyone here can.

Thur So often people only learn by experience the errors of their ways. We struggle all our lives for things that give temporary pleasure, that may lead us up a blind alley. We may get distressed or even destroyed. Then perhaps, we turn to the Lord and place our burdens on him. Then we feel relieved and resurrected.

God allows these things so that we will realise eventually where our true happiness lies.

Fri God can re-arrange the laws of nature if he wishes, if this suits his ultimate purposes. We have the example today of God altering the natural world to lengthen the life of the king and to do some miracle with the sun. Even more so can the laws of man, even religious laws, be altered or set aside if it is to God's ultimate glory. Jesus tells us not to be so rigidly attached to Church laws that we cease to keep their spirit.

Sat Today we think of the problem of why people seem to get away with evil deeds. The prophet Micah promised God's retribution on them in this life. We sometimes wish for this for wrongdoers. We ask the Lord in the Psalm to remember those who do not do evil. Jesus taught us not to be vengeful, there is another answer. He doesn't crush the evil-doer but gives them chance after chance, hoping quietly to lead them to the truth. cf. Collect? We say sorry for the times we have wanted revenge on wrongdoers rather than their conversion. E.P.4

Week 16

Mon (entry Ant). How good God is, just think what he had done for us and our Church throughout history. How marvellous he is to keep me in existence at this moment. How good he is that he actually comes to us himself. Therefore it is obvious that we should praise him, we need to acknowledge him and worship him. That's all he wants or at least what we need to do to be real people. We have come together to admit publicly our dependence on him and to say thank you. We first admit that we have often acted as though there were no God. Pref. 4

God for mercy and he overwhelms us with his generous responses. At the Old Bailey a judge ordered that a busker who was up on a drugs offence should be given money from a particular fund to get himself a guitar so that he could earn a proper living. Similarly when man begs for clemency from God, he is surprised by God's generosity. Not only are we pardoned but he says anyone who does his will in the future is part of his very own family - his mother and brother and sister. Confidently, we ask for forgiveness.

Wed God's message, his priests, teachers, parents, etc. can produce much more good than they could ever imagine, like the sower producing a great harvest from a few seeds. This is because, as the prophet Jeremiah realised, it is not our own power or influence or intelligence we rely on but on God's. This he has promised and proved.

Thur I often have lapsed or partly lapsed Catholics coming along who are quite ignorant of their Christian responsibilities. We must all be aware of the ignorance of many people about the laws of God and his Church. This is not surprising. If we are not in tune with a generous God, if we cannot be bothered with him, then, as the prophet Jeremiah found and as Jesus pointed out, people will have ears but not be able to understand. For our failure to understand due to our failure to follow Christ's ways we ask forgiveness.

Fri Jeremiah looked forward to a time when his people would allow their hearts to accept God's wisdom and knowledge. They would not hanker after the symbol of his presence among them namely the Ark of the Covenant, but would know he was guiding and ruling them himself. Jesus brought this knowledge to us. No longer do we go by oracles or shrines to find God but find him within ourselves and his Church, in proportion to our real desire to find him.

Sat Because we are not just spirits but human beings, there is always the danger that our religion will be too earthy. For example we tend to treat it a little like magic, relying on externals and doing religious acts or going to religious places rather than making it a thing of our souls. The Jews could act quite contrary to God's wishes yet think themselves alright so long as they went to the Temple occasionally. We sometimes act hypocritically like this too. Now, God won't strike us down for this, he allows us to do wrong whilst going through the religious motions. However eventually all our behaviour will be sorted out at our last day.

Week 17

Mon Today we have some parables and indeed Jesus says he will only speak in parables. The first is an action parable when the prophet plays out his message. Both are quite easy to understand except if we are not in tune with God - if we don't want to listen.

Tues There is a great deal of things wrong in the world, sufferings and cruelty and wickedness. This is found in the Church too and we sometimes feel ashamed, since we find it hard to explain away these things to disbelieving or critical colleagues. So we shall pray to God to show his glory to them, just as Jesus says will happen at the last judgment when all will be made clear. Like Jeremiah, we pray that he may show his purposes earlier, right now if possible, to convince critics.

Wed It's worth the pain of losing everything even your favourite possessions in order to find the treasure of God's love. It was worth all Jeremiah had to suffer, by way of being rejected by his friends and colleagues, when he was given the grace of God, the assurance of God. If only we would have trust that the knowledge and love of God is worth giving up everything for.

Thur We are all in the hands of God. He wishes to build up his people to refashion us to his way. But he doesn't force us to his way. Ultimately, as Jesus warned, there will be a reckoning when God will sort out, like fish in a net, those who are of God from those who are not.

Week 17 contd.

Yr 2

Fri Often a prophet is not accepted in his own town. Jeremiah wasn't nor was Jesus. We shouldn't be put off if we aren't.

Sat Two people who spoke up for God. Both were brought before the civil authorities who disliked hearing the truth. One, Jeremiah, has some support and is not put to death. The other, John the Baptist, has such a powerful enemy that he is beheaded. It is dangerous to speak the truth. We ask the Lord to rescue us. (Ps)

Week 18

Mon Today I want you to notice how the prophets use signs to teach the people and impress them. Jeremiah used several play-acting parables. Jesus used miracles. The Church today still uses these, e.g. seasons, statues, sacraments and sacramentals. What is God teaching us through these signs? Let us pray that he teaches us his 'statutes'.

Tues What the Lord wants is that we have faith in him and faith that he cares for us. That's why he allows evils to befall us and then may act to pick us up again. As a parent allows its child to get into trouble knowing it will be more appreciative of its parents' love, so God treats his chosen people in the same way. Christ proved his loving power. But all this is to draw out our faith. Having God give us everything would not be to our advantage if we lost him or forgot him.

Wed The Lord wants everyone to become his chosen family. That is why he picked out a special race of people, why Jesus insists that he had come, first for the Jews. It is not enough to say God loves everyone so we can join his family or not. If we are offered the opportunity, we must accept faith in Jesus and become Christians and if Christians, then obviously members of his Church which he has promised to shepherd.

Thur Today we think about our hearts. God promised to write his law on the hearts of his people. We can certainly do with a miracle like that to change our hearts nowadays. We pray that God will create a new heart in us. He can, just as he did in Peter. It was God who enabled him to accept Christ. So God could also change this weak-willed man into a rock of strength. He can also make my heart a great deal more loving.

Fri God is Lord of life and death. He is judge all powerful and we should never forget it. Make up your minds to accept him or not. If you don't, then, like Nineveh, great and prosperous as you may be, the Lord will punish you. If you do, even a little bit, then, like his beloved people he will reward you.

Sat Some people are so evil that they drag others after them rejoicing in their wickedness. And God allows them to hang themselves with their own rope. But he has pity on those who have been led captive or led astray by evil. He frees sinners from the bonds of sin. Only he can do it and by his power.

Week 19

Mon Jesus Christ, true God and true man. We must not forget the glory that is Jesus'. He himself, when asked about the temple tax, reminded Simon that the temple was really built to worship him or at least that it was free to him. In the first reading, the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, we get a glimpse of the glory of God. Yet Jesus didn't come to show off his glory but humbled himself, even to paying the taxes like other people.

Tues The Word of God sometimes seems unpalatable. However if we accept it as little children do, then it becomes very sweet to us.

Wed The Church has the responsibility of correcting us when we go wrong. Not that the Lord wishes to damn us or strike us down, as Ezekiel saw in his vision. But he wants us corrected with kindness. The Church guards and points out God's glory. It is against this that we are judged.

Week 19 contd,

Yr 2

Thur God is a forgiving God and teaches us to forgive. It is true that the people had been 'punished' by being sent into exile, but at least they had been warned. Today we read about an 'action prophecy'. And also how their exile became not just a punishment but the means of learning so much in a more civilised country. So like God we must always want the best for a person, not their punishment, but forgiveness for them.

We ask God to forgive us now.

Fri Today we have the wonderful teaching about the permanence of marriage. When two people are married before God then they are showing off the way God loves us. He not only cares for us as spouses should care for each other, but remains faithful even when we don't. That is why, to be like God, a husband or wife should remain faithful even if the other isn't.

Sat Children cannot be blamed for their parents misdeeds. Personal responsibility is the message today. It is too easy to blame others as the old proverb did. We are to be pure as children - Jesus showed his love for others - and not pass the buck. Each will be personally judged.

Week 20

Yr 2

Mon We are confronted with the glory of God at different times of our lives and in different ways. Maybe we come face to face with the reality of God at a time of bereavement. The prophet, Ezekiel, lost his wife and God tells him not to mourn but accept it from God as the Jews would have to face up to God in the loss of what they held so dear - their temple. We may come face to face with God by facing up to ourselves as the man in the gospel did. We find we are not all perfect as God is when he asks us for a little bit more.

Tues The difficulty of living with riches. It tends to make us feel so secure that being independent we forget that everything, including our health and life comes from God. Lose a little to Christ and we will be in safer hands than all our insurances can buy.

Wed The Lord is a most generous shepherd and if we really cared for his sheep as he did, then we would not only do everything for them but we would not be envious when they seem to deserve less.

Thur The Lord God sends out an invitation to us to come and share his joy, join his life. We may feel unworthy - we aren't saints ' but he himself has promised to clean us. So put on the garments of true Christianity and join in fully. This mass is a foretaste or preparation for the banquet of heaven.

Fri What is it that makes a man live radiantly? What is it that gives joy to one's heart? It is love and being loved. God is the source of love. Just as he can put a new heart in people, give them hope, so he does to us and we can to ourselves and others if we love and care for ourselves and others.

Sat The glory of God rests in his Church. We have the Blessed Sacrament now, foreshadowed in the old days by the magnificence of the Jewish temple. But although we are proud of our special relation with God in the Church, and we build great and beautiful churches to him, we must ourselves be humble. All glory to God and his Church but none to ourselves as above others. The pope is given the title, Servant of the servants of God, though we give him great respect in his position.

Week 21

Mon We have a great contrast in the readings today. St Paul praising his readers in Thessalonica, Our Lord castigating his listeners, the scribes and Pharisees. We praise God for the goodness of holy people. We are warned of the dangers of hypocrisy. Which are we, shining examples or stumbling blocks?

Week 21 contd.

Yr 2

Tues Today we are reminded to keep practising virtues as taught us by the apostles and the tradition of the Church. If we fail to listen to the authentic source but listen instead only to so called experts, there is a danger that we will go off on a tangent and neglect real charity.

Wed Again today we hear Our Lord warning against hypocrisy. One of the ways we can be hypocrites is by pretending to be so pious that we have no time to be helpful to others. We pretend to be religious, often go to church, but we object to doing a fair day's work, expecting others, the state, the employer, the customer, to keep us.

Thur Jesus tells us to stay awake because God will want an account of how we have used the gifts he has given us. How have I behaved today? St Paul, starting his letter to the Corinthians, congratulates them first on the way they have used the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Please God he will thank God for us too. We ask God's forgiveness for not putting our talents to his and our neighbour's service

Fri Today we think about being wise or being foolish. St Paul compares the wisdom of the cross with the wisdom of the world. Jesus gives the example of the wise bridesmaids who were prepared, with the foolish ones who weren't. Wisdom doesn't depend on the amount of brains we have but on listening to God and waiting on him.

Sat We are happy because 'The Lord has chosen us as his own'. He didn't just choose the good people. In fact, the humbler we are, the more he shows off his power by producing good through us. But he does expect us to repay his choice of us by us using his gifts that he gives us, just as we expect people not to waste the opportunities we provide for them.

Week 22

Mon Jesus was disappointed, though not surprised, by his poor reception by his own people. Yet he did not come showing off his power and authority. Likewise, St Paul, did not try to blind people with science or clever talk. God wants us to come to him freely after pondering his words, not by being swept off our feet by emotions or miracles.

Tues Just as you are the only person who can know yourself, so the Holy Spirit of God is the only one who can really know God. If we are to know God at all, then, it will be by the power of the Holy Spirit who acts where he wills. Today we have an example of how the Holy Spirit can work even in a man possessed by the devil. Look into yourselves, the Spirit is there.

Wed St Paul tells us: It is Jesus who works in us by his Spirit. The agents he uses aren't that important. Just as when we go shopping, we may have our favourite shop assistants but it is the goods that really matter. Although Jesus worked marvellous miracles, but it was his message that mattered, he wanted to lead us to the Father, not just to adore him at that time.

Thur It was when Peter was beaten by Jesus at his own game that he realised Jesus had a higher wisdom than his, not just an ability to fish, but something more. St Paul tells us today as well, that all wise men, indeed all knowledge, are there to help bring us to the wisdom of God.

Fri We are very good at criticising, especially when people don't follow the letter of the law, be it civil or religious. Jesus dealt with this in various ways. Today we hear how he foretold a new order of things and St Paul expands this teaching. 'The salvation of the just comes from the Lord'. We don't judge others, we don't even judge ourselves.

Sat Again, today, we see how people were trying to find fault with Jesus, just as they do with any good person. Paul accepts the criticism levelled at him. We should be ready to listen to what others have to say about us. Then, realising we are inferior to others in so many things, we say, 'Yes, but I've still got a job to do for Christ'.

Mon Jesus came to heal the sinner. The Jewish leaders pretended to be religious whilst forgetting the underlying law of charity. St Paul tells his Corinthians off for failing to be charitable, for failing to be holy. Christ came to bring a new order based on justice, charity, morality and holiness.

Tues Today we think of two of the Marks of the Church. The Church is Holy, the Church is Apostolic. In the early days the Church was very aware that as a community they should not only be holy but should appear to be so. They were also aware that they were not some airy fairy, religious movement, but a community based on twelve named apostles.

Wed Jesus turns some of our ideas upside down. If heaven is our ultimate destiny, then we have to rethink our purely human approach to life. Today we are asked to think about the real meaning of wealth, poverty, amusement, love, marriage etc. The world's ideas about these aren't necessarily correct when we realise that we are living in 'the last ages'.

Thur Today we are reminded to be more than just kind to each other, but to be ridiculously forgiving and compassionate even with our enemies. St Paul gives an example of what this charity may mean when he tells us to forego even lawful activities if this might upset or give scandal to others.

Fri If we wish to influence people for the better it is necessary to examine ourselves first to find our own defects. This is the first rule in any training in psychiatry or counselling. Often it will be our duty to train others. So we need to prepare ourselves well first of all. This is obviously true in the field of sports. We ask God's forgiveness for our failings, so that we can then help others.

Sat Good can only come from good, rubbish from rubbish. Communion with God and with one another comes from true worship. Truth comes from a good heart only, in particular from the mouth of Christ. If you want truth and goodness you can only be sure of it from Christ.

Week 24

Mon Jesus came to bring us to belief and harmony. He doesn't find it necessarily in us who come to mass.

It may be found in pagans, like the centurion in today's gospel. It may not be found among those at mass, as St Paul found out.. As the Psalm says, What God really wants is not so much sacrifice, as obedience.

Tues Jesus was a miracle worker but we do not think of him primarily as that. His message was the thing that mattered, and what he was, the Son of God. Likewise, each person has things they can do, preach, teach, work miracles, speak in tongues. But it is what a person is that really matters not what they can do. The Church as a whole needs each of us and our most importantly our Faith, Hope and Charity.

Wed A theme for today could be, charity, the ability to see the best in others. Charity is not complaining. Jesus was sorry that so many people of his time would not allow themselves to accept him but, like children, always found something to complain about. Truly charitable people always see the best side of others, they do not grumble.

Thur Jesus uses even sinners to do his work. We have today the famous example of the sinful woman forgiven because she loved much. This set an example to the rest at table. We have St Paul admitting that he was unworthy to be an apostle yet God used him to be teacher of the pagans.

Fri Today we can think of Jesus as he really is. We get a glimpse in the gospel of his life style. Where he did what and with whom. But, as St Paul is at pains to point out, we think of him as he is now, alive risen from the dead.

Week 24 contd.

Yr 2

Sat We can think of grains growing from seed. We can liken it to someone sowing the Faith and people growing in the Faith or not, depending on how the word of God is received. We eat grain made into bread, transformed into Christ, so that we may accept the Faith Christ sowed in order that one day we will produce a harvest 'in the presence of God' when we rise again.

Week 25

Mon Jesus says that our actions are all known to God, and as we have been given much, much will be expected of us. Well how should we act? The Book of Proverbs gives us an answer. Never refuse a kindness to anyone, do not quarrel or find fault with your neighbour.

Tues Jesus says that anyone who hears the word of God and keeps it is a member of his family. In the Psalm today, we ask God to teach us his way. In the first reading, we are indeed given some pointers as how we should behave. So listen to God's word and ask him for his help that we may keep it, so that truly we may be his family gathered around his altar, his table.

Wed The Lord sent out his twelve telling them to rely not on material things but on his message alone. We pray in the first reading, for exactly this, that God will give us just what we need, which is his word.

Thur Today we think about the littleness of man. How passing is our life and efforts. Even our sins pass, but the work of God goes on. Herod beheaded John the Baptist but that didn't satisfy his fears. The Old Testament writer recognises this too. At this mass we can think of twenty centuries come and gone with all their crises. Yet the mass today is the same sacrifice as when Jesus instituted it.

Fri Today we think of two important questions. The first is, 'what's life all about, where does it get us?' The second is, 'who is Jesus of Nazareth?' We may not understand the answer to the first question, but our approach to life depends on our answer to the second.

Sat How lovely to be young and carefree. As life goes on we have worries ahead of us. Even Jesus looked forward with fear to the sufferings ahead of him. But in spite of our fears, as it says in the psalm, 'The Lord is our refuge from one generation to another'.

Week 26

Mon Today we start reading the Book of Job which deals with the problem of suffering. Why does God allow it? This is just a story made up to enable various arguments to be aired. In the end no conclusion is really reached, except that we can't really understand God's loving ways. Jesus did not explain it, but told us likewise that he loves everyone who does his will and we must become like children, trusting him.

Tues Today we think about people who are unhappy or upset. Job, because of the tragedies which befell him, cursed the day he was born. Jesus' apostles, because of the lack of welcome they received in Samaria, were angry. We offer our misery, despair and anger to God in this mass through Christ who taught us how to deal with our emotions.

Wed Worship and adoration, this is what we come to mass for. It basically means, as Job tells us, recognising that God is Lord of everything. Jesus too, expected a complete and immediate acceptance of him. If we truly want to follow him, show adoration to him.

Thur Today's readings are a reminder that people in trouble, hunger for consolation. This comes from the truth of God's love for us seen sometimes in this world in healing and forgiveness, and in the hope for life in the future.

Fri The confidence of God. He alone knows what is best for us because he is the creator and organiser of the world. Jesus showed his authority too, when he just assumed that his words are worth hearing. If you reject his words, you reject God.

Week 26 contd.

Yr 2

Sat God's purposes cannot be understood, but only those humble enough to accept him, such as Job or the twelve apostles, will be able to appreciate his wisdom. What joy and reward there is in just believing.

Week 27

Mon Today we hear how St Paul stresses that there is only one gospel, i.e. one good news from God. Today we have an example of this message concerning charity. This will never change.

Tues Today we can think about having confidence in doing the job we find ourselves that God has given us. St Paul needs no human reassurance in his job of preaching. Martha's sister, Mary, was right in what she was doing, just listening to the Lord. 'The Lord knows all about us' (Psalm). So we do our job for Jesus to the best of our ability and do not worry.

Wed God wants all people of all races to be saved. That is why St Paul even told off St Peter for preaching one thing and doing the opposite. This is summed up by Jesus when he tells us to pray to the Father of us all.

Thur Obeying the law of God, won't get us to heaven. Only God's gift of grace will. That's why we have to beg God persistently for faith in him. True we have to cooperate with his gifts but only God can make us live forever. I try to trust not in my own goodness but in God's.

Fri Where does goodness come from? Not mere obeying rules and regulations - you could do that without love or goodness, e.g. through fear. Children? No, we believe it come from God. Likewise truly good actions cannot come from evil ones but from God's grace, as Jesus pointed out. The ends do not justify the means.

Sat It is not by obeying the law that we come close to God. It is not even by being physically related to Christ as Mary was. But by faith in him, which is a gift he put in us.

Week 28

Mon Today we make comparisons between peoples and events before Christ and when Christ came. We compare the rigid obedience or slavery to the old law, with the freedom Christ brings. We compare the reception given to the prophets with that given to Christ.

Tues Today we are urged not to allow ourselves to become slaves of anything. Our Faith sets us free. So things like rules are fine if they lead us to inner faith and charity. But in themselves obedience to them means nothing. What other things do we become slaves to? Trade unions, rules, social customs, old fashioned habits, superstitions.

Week 28 contd.

Yr 2

Wed The Spirit of God in us gives us joy, self control, goodness. The law can help us towards these things, but cannot give them and indeed so often can lead us to hypocrisy, making us make laws for others but not having love in our hearts.

Thur The Lord chose you and me from all eternity. Therefore we will have to answer for the way we have responded. We cannot say, 'we did not know', because as we say in the Psalm, 'The Lord has made known his salvation.'

Fri We are all in God's hands and are known to him personally. Some, like us, have been personally chosen by Christ so that through us, God may be glorified by all peoples.

Sat Christ is head of the Church. Even Our Lord demanded that we acknowledge him before others. Man is exalted by God, as it says in the Psalm, but Jesus is the man-God.

Week 29

Yr2

Mon Everything belongs to God, even ourselves. God cares for his possessions and saves us out of our sinfulness. We on the other hand, tend to make fools of ourselves over the things we possess. Psalm: 'He made us, we belong to him.'

Tues Christ has made us into new beings. Because of him, by our baptism, we actually live no longer as foreign nationals but as citizens of God's kingdom. So much so, that one day Christ himself will wait on us.

Wed God first chose the Jews, then offered the promise of eternal life to everyone. Now having been offered this gift, we are obviously delighted. However it does mean that we will be called to account for how we use God's grace at any moment in time.

Thur 'The Lord fills the earth with his love.' Today we think how he does so. St Paul tells us that the Spirit of God will come into us giving us God's power and knowledge. Yes real power and knowledge. It may set us apart (as supermen) and this baptism of the spirit is so strong it may necessitate us disagreeing even with our families. For the times we have played down the meaning of our baptism we are sorry. Lord have mercy.

Fri Why are we so blind, asks Jesus. The Psalm tells us, people who look for God receive his blessing. (e.g. we argue with each other as gospel points out.) If we weren't so blind we would live at peace with one another because we would see that we are one body in Christ.

Sat Each of us has been given a grace to help build up the Church. We are accountable for the support we give Christ, like bricks in a wall. It is not too late to repent and use the graces properly.

Week 30

Mon The greatest joy for us is to be freed from our sins, freed from the evil we get into. Acting evilly will bar us from heaven. Jesus can free us from our sins.

Tues Today we think of the two ways of looking at the Church;

- 1) We can compare it to a relationship. God and the Church, husband and wife.
- 2) We can think of it growing like a tree, or like yeast in cooking.

Wed Heaven is for all people who do God's will. (From the East to the West.) So during this life it does not matter how low of birth you are or whether you are in subjection to others. Be obedient and you will be obeying God. Then you and your master will one day be on equal terms in heaven.

Thur Two people preparing to be killed for their beliefs exhort their listeners to stand by the truth and accept the Faith. Paul in prison, and Christ shortly before his end. Their message is for us too, viz. under God's protection we can stand firm as a rock against the attacks of man and the devil.

Week 30 contd.

Yr 2

Fri True religion is a family affair, not a private thing. Thus St Paul rejoices in the love between his converts and encourages them to grow closer together. Jesus points out that caring for the sick is more important than just satisfying myself by keeping the letter of the law. People come first in true religion.

Sat Jesus gave us some practical advice on humility. St Paul was a humble man because he knew his real worth. He would happily prefer to die and be with Christ but he so put himself at God's disposal that he wishes God to use him and his talents as He wishes. If this means continuing in his job as an apostle, then he is happy to do this since he does it so well. It is not pride to wish to die and be with God, it is not pride to continue and do God's work well on earth.

Week 31

Mon Today we think about humility. Knowing our place, not trying to be better than anyone else, but realising that rich or poor, good or bad, we are all equal before God. We should think of each other's interests first.

Tues God became man in order that we might be raised to become God's children. The second person of the Trinity humbled himself and took on a human nature. He wanted everyone, no matter how humble, to come to his great feast in the assembly of heaven. We assemble at this mass as a foretaste of that great assembly.

Wed God gives us plenty of opportunities to do his work every day. If we make up our minds to do his work, then the occasion will arise. If we decide to work for God, he will also give the ability to do his tasks.

Thur It is Jesus who saves us, not our own efforts. He seeks out the sinner. It is not by obeying the law or obeying the right practices that I earn heaven. So, St Paul is insistent that, circumcision though originally ordered by Jewish law, cannot possibly save us.

Fri Today we compare worldly people and spiritual people. The former use their wits and their desires to please themselves in this life. The latter use them to prepare for eternal happiness. As Christ says, we can learn by how hard people work to procure this world's goods to see how we should work to procure those of the next. 'Spend as much attention on your souls as on your cars. (John Paul II)

Sat Today we are shown how to use our wealth. Jesus tells us it is given to us on trust to prove ourselves worthy of greater riches in heaven. St Paul is pleased with the financial support from the people of Philippi as it builds up interest in their own spiritual bank. (Ps) 'Open-handed' we should give to the poor.

Week 32

Mon Jesus gives advice to his disciples on how they should live, giving good example, and being forgiving, and people of faith. Even more so, as St Paul points out, should priests lead blameless lives.

Tues Those with an office in the Church should lead exemplary lives, but as Christ points out they must always remember that they are servants.

Wed Gratitude to God who cares for us even while we are sinful. Jesus and the ten lepers. God who baptises us whilst we are cut off from God.

Thur This mass is about physical partings and spiritual meetings. Paul and Jesus speak about their impending leaving of this world. But Paul sends back a run away slave, to a friend, whom he hopes will be treated as a converted spiritual brother. Jesus says after he departs physically, he will be closer spiritually.

Fri Today we are given warnings. By St John, about deceiving ourselves so that we are not ready when God comes. Jesus also. This may be our personal last day or the end of the world. The only true security is, as the Psalm says, 'They are happy who follow God's law.'

Sat St John asks that we support those who preach the gospel. Jesus promised that God will look after those who keep begging for his help. At least we can support missionaries by our prayers.

Week 33

Mon Today we think about how God opens our eyes. First we start St John's account of the revelation God gave him, opening his eyes to the glory of God and opening the eyes of seven local Christian communities to their own state of life. Second, we see Jesus opening the eyes of the blind man open to faith.

Week 33 contd.

Yr 2

Tues Today we are given a chance to turn over a new leaf. No matter whether we are thoroughly detestable like the traitor and thief Zachaeus, or whether we are like two Christian communities at Sardis and Laodicea which had grown cold in the Faith, who had once been warm.

Wed One day we will stand before the throne of God most high, the almighty and holy. He will want an account of our stewardship of the goods and talents he has put in our charge in this life.

Thur Jesus claimed to be the saviour of Jerusalem and thus of the chosen people, if only they would accept him. St John later on had a vision of the Messiah - the Lamb of God who saves all men of all races and nations and makes them into the new chosen people. That is, we are now a line of kings and priests.

Fri We have to examine our lives and our motives carefully, they may not always be what they seem to be. Outwardly fine and acceptable to others, outwardly achieving favour and wealth. Inwardly are we ready to meet Christ? Will he drive us out of our complacency?

Sat God is the God of the living but heaven is something we believe in but can't imagine. Poetically we can think of God's protection of his people, persecuted in this life but who eventually will live on in heaven.

Week 34

Mon Who will go to heaven? Jesus points to the poor person giving 100% to God. St John sees a vast crowd of God's worshippers who have kept true.

Tues Today we think about the end of the world. In poetic imagery we read from the Revelations of St John and from Jesus' prophecy. God will want an account of how we have behaved, because as the Psalm says,
'He will come to rule the earth'.

Wed Joy comes after suffering. After all the difficulties, disaster and persecutions of this life, God will give a beautiful life to those who remain faithful to him. Sometimes it will appear that we are deserted by God, all our friends may turn on us, but, as the Psalm says, 'God has remembered his truth and his love'.

Thur Today a warning about God's judgment. He will not be mocked but his will will prevail and we bring destruction on ourselves by constantly going against the grain. Happy are those who persevere to the end.

Fri Today we think of the last day and how we shall be judged by Christ. When will this happen? Christ did not tell us, but he said, be prepared, for God is always near us. We should live, now, so that, as the Psalm says, 'God can live in us.'

Sat Stay awake, God gives us the last warning of the Church's year about the dangers to our souls. He has also given us the cure, represented by the river in St John's revelations - the graces flowing from the Church.