



# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF OUR LORD & ALL SOULS



The Catholic parish of Chapelfields & Earlsdon  
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A parish of the Archdiocese of Birmingham in collaboration with the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

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SUNDAY 31 JANUARY 2021

## 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Grant us, Lord our God, that we may honour you with all our mind, and love everyone in truth of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen

### THE GOD WHO SPEAKS: CELEBRATING, LIVING & SHARING GOD'S WORD

#### The Book of Judges: Stories and legends of the tribes of Israel

#### Early life in the Promised Land

The book of Judges continues the story of Israel's conquest and gradual occupation of the whole of the Promised Land. It tells stories and legends of Israel's time of tribal life in Palestine which lasted about 200 years. At this point, the tribes were far from being a nation; instead, the links were a loose (sometimes very loose) confederation of tribes. Judges tells the story of the ups and downs of their early life in the Promised Land. Some would say that Judges is the tragic sequel to the Book of Joshua.

#### The Twelve Judges

This book follows the exploits of the twelve judges during this period (one for each tribe): Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. They are the leaders who arose in times of great need and led the tribes to victory in one or more battles.

#### The consequence of faithlessness

The main theme underlying these stories: **God will be with Israel if they are faithful; but will abandon them to their enemies if they are not.** It is framed in an identical pattern throughout the Book of Judges: (1) the people did evil and sinned in the sight of God; (2) God, in his anger, delivered them to an oppressor; (3) the

people cried out to God; (4) God sent a hero to deliver them and (5) the land had peace all the days of the judge's life.

#### Samson and Delilah

One example of this pattern is Samson, who was called from birth to begin the deliverance of Israel from Philistine oppression (Judges 13:5). He was a man of great physical strength but he was morally weak. When he fell in love with Delilah, he abandoned his God-assigned mission. His indiscretion led to blindness, imprisonment and powerlessness. When you read the account of his downfall with Delilah, you might think Samson was a failure, but God used his failures and mistakes to accomplish his God-assigned mission and, through his death, Samson destroyed more of his enemies in one sacrificial act, than he had previously killed in all the battles of his life.

#### A message from the book of Judges

The stories of the Judges show that God works for the oppressed, that nothing can succeed without God's support and that even defeat presents an opportunity for living according to God's Law.

#### An important quotation

"I will never break my covenant with you" (Judges 2:1)

### ✠ WORSHIP THIS WEEK ✠

<b>Sunday 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</b>	<b>10.30am MASS</b>	<i>For the People of the Parish Andrew Gardner RIP (Fr Tim)</i>
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	Feria in Ordinary Time	9.30am Mass	<i>Jackie Wilson RIP (funeral today)</i>
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD (Candlemas)</b>	<b>9.30am MASS</b>	<i>Carmel Jones RIP</i>
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Feria in Ordinary Time	9.30am Mass	<i>Maurice Blount RIP</i>
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Feria in Ordinary Time	7.30pm Mass	<i>Intentions of Dorothea Wheeler</i>
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St. Agatha, Virgin &amp; Martyr</b>	9.30am Mass	<i>Ernest &amp; Mary Shiner RIP</i>
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St. Paul Miki &amp; Companions, Martyrs</b>	9.30am Mass	<i>Jarlath Mellett RIP</i>
		10.30-11.30am	Confessions (Sacrament of Reconciliation)
<b>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</b>	<b>10.30am MASS</b>	<i>For the People of the Parish Kitty Hennessy RIP</i>

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for half an hour before Mass Monday-Saturday  
Daily Evening Prayer (Vespers) via Zoom at 6pm (email Fr Paul to receive log-in details)  
Confession is also available before Mass and by arrangement

## PUBLIC WORSHIP AT ALL SOULS

A daily public Mass continues at All Souls during lockdown. Individuals must of course decide for themselves whether it is advisable to attend in person and how *frequently* they attend public worship in the week. **It is very important that people do not mingle with others in church or outside church before/during/after Mass.** Live streaming of Masses continues.

## Echoes of God: Journeying with the word of God Week 2: Genesis

This is a 7-week journey through the Bible by David McLoughlin. Hard copies of the materials are available in the exit porch. If you are reading this online, scroll down to the materials.

**THE RECENTLY DEPARTED** Of your charity pray for the repose of the souls of **Patrick Joseph Meehan, Jacqueline (Jackie) Wilson**, whose funerals take place this week, and **Yvonne Bradford** whose funeral is on Monday 22 February.

## GROWING FAITH Week 12: Creation, Fall, Salvation

This week's session is entitled Creation, Fall, Salvation. Simply follow the link, press play and enjoy the video: <https://www.sycamore.fm/videos/session-12-creation-fall-salvation/> Those receiving the link by email will also find an attachment with some material for reflection.

**REFLECTIONS BY PAUL PALMER** One of our parishioners, Paul Palmer, has produced a book entitled *Reflections*. It is "a collection of religious, poetic reflections, covering some of the major events in the Christian calendar". It is available in the exit porch priced £4. Paul has very kindly asked that all proceeds go to parish funds. A very good lockdown read!

**MEMOIRS OF A CATHOLIC CHILDHOOD** Christine Knox, a parishioner of Our Lady of the Assumption parish, has written a memoir of her childhood (1937-1949) with an emphasis on her faith. It can be purchased at [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk), search "**Chrissie O': The story of an Catholic Irish immigrant child**". It reminds us how in a time of such hardship and danger, family and Church lifted and sustained people in a way we perhaps need very much today. Another good lockdown read!

**THANKYOUS** Many parishioners give very generously of their time, talents and resources to the parish, but two recent donations deserve special mention.

Charmaine Bird, leader of the dementia support group which meets in the parish room weekly, wanted to make a donation to the parish to say thank you for being able to hold meetings throughout most of the pandemic. This has taken the form of the replacement and fitting of much-needed new blinds in the parish room and shortly the replacement of a couple of damaged windows. We are very grateful indeed to Charmaine, and to her husband for carrying out the work.

Secondly, a huge thank you to an anonymous donor who has purchased a new laptop for the parish to improve our live streaming facility. Again we are very grateful indeed. Fr Paul is in the process of switching internet provider so that we get maximum benefit from the laptop's capabilities.

**CHURCHES TOGETHER MORNING PRAYER** Earlsdon Methodist church will host the February monthly 'Prayer Breakfast' at 8am this Saturday on Zoom. If you're not on the parish emailing list, please ask Fr Paul for log in details.

**...AND PRAYERS IN LENT** At 7pm on the Tuesdays of Lent members of the different churches are invited to come together on Zoom for a time of prayer. More details to follow.

## RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY

The bedrock of Catholic Social Teaching is that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Regardless of any factors or reasons we can think of, individuals have an inherent and immeasurable worth and dignity. Our equality before God in this regard leads us to think no less of somebody because they are from a different place or culture.

## God the Father of all

*Faith in the one God, Creator and Redeemer of all humankind made in his image and likeness, constitutes the absolute and inescapable negation of any racist ideologies. It is still necessary to draw out all the consequences of this: "We cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people in other than brotherly fashion, for all men are created in God's image."*

(*The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society*, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, 1988, #19.)

## Racism is morally unacceptable

*The centrality of the human person and the natural inclination of persons and peoples to establish relationships among themselves are the fundamental elements for building a true international community, the ordering of which must aim at guaranteeing the effective universal common good. . . . any theory or form whatsoever of racism and racial discrimination is morally unacceptable.* (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 433)

## An Examination of Conscience

- + Have I fully loved God and fully loved my neighbour as myself?
- + Have I caused pain to others by my actions or my words that offended my brother or sister?
- + Have I done enough to inform myself about the sin of racism, its roots, and its historical and contemporary manifestations?
- + Is there a root of racism within *me* that blurs my vision of who my neighbour is?
- + Have I ever witnessed an occasion when someone "fell victim" to personal, institutional, systematic or social racism and I did or said nothing?
- + Have I ever been the perpetrator of racist actions or words against another, acting contrary to love of God and love of neighbour?

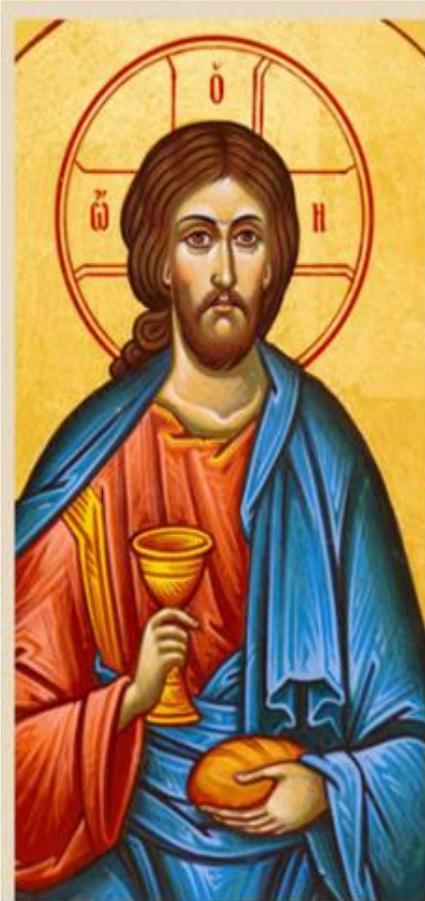
## Let us pray

*O God, who gave one origin to all peoples  
and willed to gather from them one family for yourself,  
fill all hearts, we pray, with the fire of your love  
and kindle in them a desire  
for the just advancement of their neighbour,  
that, through the good things which you richly bestow upon all,  
each human person may be brought to perfection,  
every division may be removed,  
and equity and justice may be established in human society.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

(Roman Missal, Collect for a Mass For the Progress of Peoples)

The Bishops' Conference has commissioned a series of videos to share the thoughts of Black Catholics about the events of the past year, how we can build a better society and the important role that our Church can play. These are available at: [cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justice-sunday-2021](https://cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justice-sunday-2021)

## Prayers for Spiritual Communion



### Prayer for Spiritual Communion

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

Amen.

### Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me  
Body of Christ, save me  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me  
Water from the side of Christ,  
wash me  
Passion of Christ, strengthen  
me  
O good Jesus, hear me  
Within thy wounds hide me  
Permit me not to be separated  
from thee  
From the wicked foe defend me  
At the hour of my death call me  
And bid me come to thee  
That with thy saints I may praise  
thee  
For ever and ever. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to  
your disciples, 'I am with you

always'. Be with me today as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep us all in your care. Amen.

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me, help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Prayer of General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth your praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Conclude with the following:*

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. Amen.

## ECHOES OF GOD: JOURNEYING WITH THE WORD OF GOD Week Two: Genesis



As the Hebrew slaves journey towards the Promised Land, they reflect further on their experience of liberation. The People of “*the God*” look backward to the beginning of things and forward to where they might be travelling next. Gradually, they come to realise “*the God*” who is “*I am*” must also be the source of all that is, and its ultimate end. This is an inspired understanding going beyond all that the religions around them taught about their local gods.

As they walk through difficult places, some very desert-like, they imagine “*the God*”, their Creator, back in a beautiful original garden, perhaps inspired by the oases they hope for as they cross the desert. There “*the God*” chose to walk in the cool of the evening amidst the peaceful creatures, in the company of man and his companion.

Genesis has two creation accounts which themselves demonstrate how the people of “*the God*” again and again look backward and forward trying to understand who “*I am*” is, and what he wants of them. At the beginning of Mark’s Gospel, there is an echo of this as Mark thinks of Jesus alone in the wilderness with just the animals and the angels for company. He is thinking of Jesus as a new Adam starting to renew the relationship between “*the God*” and humanity.

The story echoes throughout the Bible until the very last book where the original paradise is recreated as a Garden City. Here at the end of time, the God will again dwell in the midst of his people in a renewed Jerusalem (Revelation Chapter 21).

### **Genesis 2:4-2:25 - The Creation.**

Such was the story of heaven and earth as they were created. At the time when the Lord God made earth and heaven, there was as yet no wild bush on the earth nor had any wild plant yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth, nor was there any man to till the soil. Instead, water flowed out of the ground and watered all the surface of the soil. The Lord God shaped man from the soil of the ground and blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. From the soil, the Lord God caused to grow every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided to make four streams. The first is named the Pishon, and this winds all through the land of Havilah where there is gold. The gold of this country is pure; bdellium and cornelian stone are found there. The second river is named the Gihon, and this winds all through the land of Cush. The third river is named the

Tigris, and this flows to the east of Ashur. The fourth river is the Euphrates. The Lord God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it. Then the Lord God gave the man this command, 'You are free to eat of all the trees in the garden. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you are not to eat; for, the day you eat of that, you are doomed to die.' The Lord God said, 'It is not right that the man should be alone. I shall make him a helper.' So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild animals. But no helper suitable for the man was found for him. Then, the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And, while he was asleep, he took one of his ribs and closed the flesh up again forthwith. The Lord God fashioned the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. And the man said: This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! She is to be called Woman, because she was taken from Man. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and they become one flesh. Now, both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame before each other."

As they journey towards the Promised Land, the People of God ponder "*the God*" who has called Moses to lead them. They know the ancient stories about Abram and Sara who had set out in search of the one God, but for so long they have been surrounded by the gods of the Egyptians and their temples and priests. This God "*I am who I am*" is very different from all that they have known. Sometimes they moan against Moses, and the journey that "*the God*" is leading them on. Yet in all their trials, this God stands by them leading them with smoke by day and fire by night, providing food (*mannah*) and water (even from the desert rocks at Meribah and Massah), and safety.

As they sit around their fires in the evenings, they ponder their God. Slowly, their inspired thinkers begin to see patterns in their God's engagement. They realise "*the God*" is not like the local gods of Egypt and Canaan and they begin to see the implication that "*the God*" is the Creator of all. Their inspired storytellers shape a story from within the world they know to express this daring revelation. This is the world of the Nile delta with its red clay soil *adamah* and the harsh desert. A wilderness which is searing hot by day and freezing cold at night. There it is easy to get lost and die for lack of water, sustenance, or shade.

So they ponder what did God intend when God created? They make a brave statement:

"When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens... then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." (New American Bible Revised Edition)

So much is going on here as God speaks to the people through the words of the inspired storyteller. *Adamah* is the same clay that the oppressed Hebrew slaves turned into bricks to build Pharaoh's pyramids day after day. Here, the very stuff of oppression, *adamah*, is turned, by the hands of God, into the living creature *Adam* with whom God chooses to speak and share life.

And where does God place Adam? In a garden in Eden in the fertile plain of Sumeria. How different from the desert places they were crossing! God plants a *paradise*, which is the Persian word for a pleasure garden, for God's own delight. God places the human being within it. And what do you seek as you cross a desert? An oasis, with water, trees and vegetation. God creates Adam as the first gardener in paradise to nurture this oasis and to learn from it. Then God asks Adam not to tamper with the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil because its knowledge is destructive, and death dealing (Genesis 2:16). At this point, Adam is God's innocent gardener and friend. For companionship for Adam, God creates the animals and invites Adam to name them to complete them. At this point "*the God*", man, and the natural created world are in a simple relationship of

mutuality. But the animals are not an adequate helpmate for man. So God takes a rib from the sleeping man, in Hebrew *ish* and creates *ishah* wo-man. They are naked and without shame, delighting in their simple being together.

Well we all know what happens next. Another creature, the serpent, tempts them to aspire beyond their beautiful lives, to be dis-satisfied. However, as they gain the knowledge of good and evil by actually committing evil and breaking the law, they unravel the beautiful, ordered reality that the Creator had made them capable of enjoying. They lose the simplicity of their relationship with God, with each other, with the creatures and the very earth itself. This inspired story still speaks powerfully to us today. We are aware of the consequences of human arrogance and greed in our relationships with each other, with the creatures with which we share our planet and with the soil, the forests and plants and oceans we have polluted. The beautiful balance and order that God brought forth is compromised more than ever in our day.

The new people of God moving towards a divinely Promised Land would try to build a land where the vision of the divinely inspired storyteller could become real again. For them the Creation accounts became prophecies of what life could be, in a renewed and dynamic, relationship with their mysterious God : *"I am who I am"* (Exodus.3:14).

After some time, as they began to build that society, they would re-imagine the Creation in more detail and this eventually becomes the very first part of Genesis and of the Hebrew Scriptures (Genesis 1 to 2:3). But, the storytellers there, perhaps Priests from the Temple in Jerusalem, now see God's creative work in a holy week of seven days with morning and evening, just as the daily life of the Temple in Jerusalem was defined by Morning and Evening prayer. In that story, the resting of God on the seventh day hallows the whole work of Creation. The Sabbath rest will help the people to remember their calling to imagine God in the midst of Creation and to lead it to its fulfilment, yet that is quite another story.

Throughout the two accounts and the rest of the book of Genesis, each section is introduced with the phrase *"This is the Story of..."*. The inspired narrators invite us to enter into the stories to which each generation can bring its experiences of joy and sadness, peace and war, fear and hope. These texts, as God's inspired word, can re-shape our awareness, and invite us to return to the vision that the Creator continues to offer us. The vision so beautifully echoed in the later words of the Prophet Micah:

*"...he has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God."* (Micah 6:8).

Again, and again, the books of the Bible will echo and reflect the great themes of Genesis. Despite the story of human culpability for sin and the violence of our world, the Bible will still end with a re-reading of this story in an ultimate future. There in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, will be the final vision of that Garden City. A new paradise, flowing with water and blessed with myriad trees where God will indeed live in the midst of a peaceable people. Again, and again, the Scriptures remind us that the original blessing of God's creativity is always greater than the original human sin, with all its real but limited effects. May it be so!

### **Reflection**

Take a little time to re-read the creation account.

Can you see what it is that holds you in peace with those around you, with the plants and creatures, and the whole planet?

Can you identify how this peace sometimes breaks down? What is the suggested remedy?

Written by David McLoughlin