

## Fr Henry's reflections on the first & second readings of Sunday 4th August

### 1st Reading: Manna from Heaven (Exodus 16:2-4.12-15)

The journey of the people of Israel through the desert of Sinai is regarded in the Bible from two quite different angles. From one angle it is the time of perfect harmony between God and his people, the honeymoon period when God was with his people Israel and when the people walked with him, trusting him on their journey in the wilderness. From the other angle it is seen as the beginning of a murmuring against the Lord, which will grow into the infidelities which eventually will lead to Israel's punishment by the exile to Babylon.

This account of bread from heaven shows both Israel's impatience with the Lord and the Lord's supreme patience with Israel.

The story demonstrates how God cared for his people and provided them with food during a generation's wandering in the savagely inhospitable desert of Sinai - a huge, infertile expanse of rock and sand, where virtually nothing grows. This care is focussed on manna, a sweet substance excreted from bushes on Sinai in a way which Israel found miraculous. The story has grown in the telling: it is linked to keeping the Sabbath, for manna could not be harvested on the Sabbath. Secondly, with typical Hebrew wordplay, this odd substance is linked to the Hebrew word manhu, meaning 'What is it?'

***What does this pattern of the people's infidelity tell us about humanity and about God?***

### 2nd Reading: A New Creation in Christ (Ephesians 4:17.20-24)

In his great classic letter to the Romans Paul teaches that by being baptised into Christ's death we have been joined with Christ in his resurrection and become a new being, fused with Christ or grafted into Christ. He sees us as living with Christ's life-principle, the Spirit, rather than our old corrupt life-principle. In First Corinthians he enlarges on the ways of life which this brings, the varied gifts of the Spirit which together make up the Christian body, the Body of Christ. Now, in Ephesians, we see a consequence of this. The Christian body is repeatedly described as a New Man, a new creation, after the model of Christ, the Second Adam. What does all this talk of 'new creation' amount to in real terms? Firstly, it poses the question whether we have really been renewed. Are my values and attitudes radically new as a Christian? Do they differ from the priorities which I would have without Christianity? ***How do I best use my talents to build up the Body of Christ?***

## Parish Newsletter:

St. Mary's & St. Aidan's Churches

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[www.stmarysforesthall.co.uk](http://www.stmarysforesthall.co.uk)

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## Sunday 4th August 2024

### 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

After listening to today's Gospel, The Bread of Life (John 6:24-35), consider this reflection.

After the account of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Jesus explains the significance of the event. First he stresses that its importance lies not in the material food that goes bad, but in that of which the food is a sign. The people must understand the sign-value of the food, its ultimate fulfilment in Jesus of the manna in the desert: we do not live by bread alone but by every word which comes from the mouth of God. The whole explanation is built on a contrast between Moses and Jesus, between the food given by Moses and that given by Jesus. Jesus is the bread of life as the eucharistic bread, and also as revelation.

We often concentrate exclusively on the eucharistic meaning of this chapter. This introduction to the Bread of Life discourse, however, emphasises that it is belief and understanding which is first required, and only then does Jesus begin to explain the deeper meaning of the bread. Jesus gives the explanation of what he has done in the synagogue at Capernaum, and – after the manner of Jewish sermons of the time – each phrase of the scriptural quotation from the Book of Exodus is commented on in turn: Bread from heaven / he gave them / to eat.

*If this miraculous feeding is a sign, what is it a sign of?*

**Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB**

## **NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES**

**EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:** Monday 5th August, 6pm at St Aidan's  
Led by Deacon Alison Rebello. Everyone welcome.

**CONFESSION:** Saturday 10th August, 11am at St Mary's

**CLOTHING DONATIONS:** Can you help?

Charities supported by both our parishes have a continuous need for donations of clothing that is distributed to those with nothing. Items can be left at either church and are most gratefully received.

**COLLECTIONS:** 28th July 2024

St Aidan's - Loose Plate: £188.00 / Envelopes: £77.00 / Hall Hire: £40.00

Candles: £56.50 / Piety: £14.50 / Papers: £9.00

St Mary's - Loose Plate: £325.67 / Envelopes: £23.00 / Funeral: £479.00

Donations: £140.00 / Friday Coffee Morning: £69.00 (People's Kitchen).

For details about Gift Aid or donating via standing order, please email parishsecretary@mail.com

*Thank you for your continued support and generosity.*

**EVENT PLANNERS NEEDED:** Can you help organise a parish social event?

Please speak to Fr Hall or email parishsecretary@mail.com

**RECEIVED INTO OUR CHURCHES:** If you or someone you know is interested in becoming part of our family, please speak to Fr Hall, Deacon Rebello or email parishsecretary@mail.com

## **NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE**

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:** St Aloysius, Hebburn

The Diocese will be delivering courses for those who wish to become an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion in the Autumn.

Session 1: Monday 30 September 7.00 - 9.00pm

Session 2: Monday 7 October 7.00 - 9.00pm

Session 3: Saturday 19 October 10.30am – 4.00pm

Those interested please speak to Fr Hall or email parishsecretary@mail.com

**VACANCIES:** [www.diocesehn.org.uk/job-vacancies](http://www.diocesehn.org.uk/job-vacancies) or 0191 243 3301.

Parish Finance Officer, full-time, on a two-year fixed-term contract.

Closing date for applications: 13 August.

Cleaner, St Charles, Gosforth – 5 hours a week. Closing date: 16th August.

## **MASS INTENTIONS:** w/c 4th August 2024

Sat 3rd Aug (St. Mary's)	5.30pm	Ged Lawler
Sun 4th (St. Aidan's)	9.15am	James Allan Scott
Sun 4th (St. Mary's)	11.00am	Margaret Scott
* Mon 5th (St. Aidan's)	6.00pm	<i>Eucharistic Adoration</i>
Tues 6th (St. Mary's)	10.00am	Gerard Earley
Wed 7th (St. Aidan's)	10.00am	Sick family and Friends
Thurs 8th (St. Aidan's)	10.00am	Thanks for Priests and Bishops
Fri 9th (St. Mary's)	10.00am	Priest's Intention
* Sat. 10th (St Aidan's)	11.00am	<i>Confession</i>
Sat 10th (St. Mary's)	5.30pm	Carol Roberts and D'cd family
Sun 11th (St. Aidan's)	9.15am	People of the Parish
Sun 11th (St. Mary's)	11.00am	People of the Parish

**For Mass Intentions, please see envelopes in our churches.**

"I want to be like a sunflower;  
so that even on the darkest days

I will stand tall and find the sunlight." – Unknown

**PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK:** 11th Aug - 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

*"Unlimited in generosity, tireless in forgiveness: being sealed by the Spirit commits us to this same sort of consideration for others."*

(2nd Reading: Ephesians 4:30-5:2)

**CHILDREN'S PRAYER:**

"The summertime offers many people an occasion for rest.

It's also a favourable time to take care of our relationships." Pope Francis.

**WE ASK THAT YOU PRAY FOR:**

Those in our parishes who are sick or who may need our thoughts and prayers. Those who have died recently. And those of our parishes whose anniversary occurs at this time.

**KEEP IN TOUCH:** Contact us parishsecretary@mail.com / 0191 268 4222

Access weekend mass live via YouTube, search St Mary of the Rosary

Newsletters & Homilies can be viewed on [www.stmarysforesthall.co.uk](http://www.stmarysforesthall.co.uk)