



# **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February**

## **Second Sunday of Lent**

**This week's "St Mary's Musings", our online thought and prayer,  
has been recorded by John White.**

**It will be available on the website from Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>**

**<https://www.otterystmary.org.uk/online-services>**

The bible readings for this Sunday are:

**Genesis 17. 1-7, 15-16**

**Romans 4. 13-end**

**Mark 8. 31-end**

### **Today's Collect**

**Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent  
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,  
and by following in his Way  
come to share in his glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Alone with none but thee, my God,  
I journey on my way.  
What need I fear, when thou art near  
O King of night and day?  
More safe am I within thy hand  
than if a host did round me stand.

Columba, c.521 – 597



*'Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."' Mark 8.34*

We're more than a week into Lent. Today's Bible readings tell us the story of Abraham and Sarah to whom God made a promise, and through them to all nations, to all peoples and for all time. The people were told to obey God and in return God would guide them and protect them. There was the particular promise of descendants for the couple, of a land for the Jewish nation, and the assurance of God's blessing and redemption.

In his letter to the early church in Rome, St Paul picked up on the significance of the promise of redemption made to Abraham. He reminds these Christians they stand in line to receive the same promise of redemption made to Abraham all those centuries before. Paul says it is because of faith Abraham was counted righteous before God and that by faith we too are counted as righteous in God's eyes.

We share in the promises and love of God and are called to grow in love. God's love is *agape* love, which means love in action, not just words. Lent is when we examine ourselves, ponder on the things of God and indeed *"take up our cross"* in part to check out how well we are doing.

The phrase *"take up our cross"* is one that has acquired many meanings. For some it is a burden of life they carry with them. For others a heart-felt desire to press on doing the right thing even though it is costly and maybe misunderstood. But what does it mean to you, to take up your cross, I wonder?

For me, the main thought I have is that I need to die a little to selfish desires and be increasingly open to the loving purposes of God whatever they might be. I believe God is present and active and intervenes in his world, not least through his followers. He desires to change things for good and calls us to change too that we might be more closely aligned with his will.

Today it is time to ponder afresh what it means to *"take up our cross"*.

John Hall

**Nationwide call to prayer** - The Archbishops of Canterbury and York invite people to set aside a time every evening throughout the month of February – 6pm is the suggestion – to pray and remember the 100,000 plus people across the UK who have died after contracting Covid-19 and those who know and love them. Prayer resources are available on the CoE website, <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/prayer-nation> and we will include some of the prayers on the front page of this sheet each week.

*"More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other: Prayer is an expression of love."* Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

### **Church Diary for the w/c 1<sup>st</sup> March**

Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10am-12pm	Church Open for Private Prayer
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup>	10am-12pm	Church Open for Private Prayer
	11.30am	World Day of Prayer by Zoom (see notice below)

### **Church News and Notices**

**In our prayers** – Dorothy Ward, Myra Risk, Jayne Costello, Hazel Abley, Pat Cottrell, Patricia Jackson, Anne Decent, Ruth and Barrie Swift, Derek Baxter, Pat Roy, Shirley-Ann Williams, Lizzie Gleaves, Ken and Rosemary Dafforn, Tony Delahay, Ben and family.

**St Mary's Musings** – If you can't access our on-line services, a transcript can be made available. Please contact Sue in the church office.

**Lent Stories** - Rev Lionel Stock has recorded six Lent reflections for us and each one tells the story of one of the leading characters in the Passion story. Lionel's Introduction to the Series and the first reflection, the story of Peter, are now up on the website <https://www.otterystmary.org.uk/online-services>

**Easter Services** – We are making plans to offer a Good Friday Reflection in church, from 2-3pm, which will be led by Rev Mac Dick, and two church services on Easter Day. For more information on re-opening and plans for church services, please read the statement on page 5 of this sheet.

**The Ottery Prayer Diary for March** is now available on the website. Thank you to Anitra Lockwood who has written the prayers for us this month.

**World Day of Prayer – March 5<sup>th</sup>** - Canon Cate Edmonds is running an online World Day of Prayer service on 5<sup>th</sup> March at 11.30am. Please contact MMUK, [katie.drew@mmuk.net](mailto:katie.drew@mmuk.net) for the log in details. This year's Day of Prayer is from Vanuatu and the theme is "Build on a Strong Foundation".

**Date for the diary** – this year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May.

**St Petrock's** would like to thank Ottery residents who have donated clothing and sleeping bags over the past few months. They particularly require men's jeans and jogging bottoms as well as sleeping bags. Items can be left with Mia Decent, Secret Garden House, Saddlers Lane. It's also possible to make a financial donation at

<http://stpetrocks.org.uk/menu-text-how-you-can-help/how-you-can-help/donate/> It is the charity's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

### **Charity of the Month – Mothers Union**

**Di Passey writes "Our members are sad not to have met since March but we try to keep in touch, think how good it will be when we can get together again!"**

Though life be fraught with all manner of sorrows  
the stresses and strains that beset us each day.

Be firm in your faith for the Lord will be with you,  
and be by your side as your strength and your stay.

You can support the Mothers Union via our contactless card machine in church, by cheque payable to "Ottery St Mary PCC" and posted to our treasurer at Keppel Gate, Higher Ridgeway, Ottery St Mary EX11 1TJ. Please write MU on the back of your cheque. Or by BACs to The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Ottery St Mary Sort Code: 09-01-29 Acc no: 36273067, using MU as your reference.

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Rev Mark Ward: 01395 568390

**Online services** – You are welcome to join any of the other online worship taking place in our Mission Community. Newton Poppleford, Colaton Raleigh, Harpford, Tipton St. John and Venn Ottery meet at 10am every Sunday for worship on Zoom. Email

[vicar@newtonpopplefordchurch.org.uk](mailto:vicar@newtonpopplefordchurch.org.uk) for details of how to join. West Hill also has Zoom worship every Sunday. For details of how to join for the first time, contact Sue in Ottery church office. Rev David Carrington posts a service on YouTube each Sunday. You can find the link at <https://www.efpchurch.org.uk/>

Following the Prime Minister's statement to the Commons on Monday, the Bishop of London issued the following response on behalf of the Church of England:

*"The Government has asked us to stay at home to save lives and protect the NHS. Under the current regulations the Government has permitted public worship to continue, if it is safe to do so.*

*While many churches have decided to offer digital services only for the time being, others are continuing to remain open, in a Covid-secure way, for individual prayer and public worship. The circumstances in each place will inform a local decision.*

*We urge everyone to be exceptionally cautious and, in particular, to do everything possible to prevent mingling outside of households and support bubbles.*

*We acknowledge and share the sadness many are feeling at not being able to meet together as we would usually do at the moment and prayerfully and confidently look forward to better times ahead."*

### Review of Church Services by the PCC

The Bishop of Exeter has extended all the dispensations for church closure which were given to churches in the diocese who sought permission in January. This extension now runs until March 29<sup>th</sup>. Taking into account that extended permission and Government guidance given on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, our PCC have agreed, after much thought and prayer, that our church should continue to stay closed for Sunday worship and Morning Prayer up to March 29<sup>th</sup>.

This decision was based on the clear message given by the Government to prevent any mixing of households before this date and to ensure everyone of all ages in our church stays safe. We will be continuing with our current church opening for Private Prayer, on Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10am to noon and we are very grateful to the people who enable this to take place each week, as well as those creating our online reflections.

We hope to open again as soon as the next phase in the lessening of Government restrictions is announced, potentially on March 29<sup>th</sup>. That would mean that we could begin Morning Prayer on Wednesday March 31<sup>st</sup>, and for Easter Week, have our hour of Reflection in church on Good Friday and our services at 7am and 10am on Easter day.

After that we plan to hold a weekly Sunday service in church at 10am.