

People of the Word: The Judges

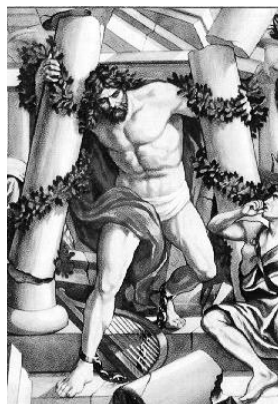
After the people of Israel settled in the Promised Land, they began to stray from God and worshipped idols. There were times of rebellion and threats from other nations. During this time they were ruled by 'judges', amongst whom are some famous names: **Deborah, Gideon and Samson.**



Deborah was a prophetess who is listed amongst the judges. She called upon Barak to gather an army to free the people, who were oppressed by the Canaanites.

Gideon led an army to defend Israel against attacks from the Midianites. With only a tiny army he defeated a much larger force, putting all his trust in God.

Samson is the most famous of the judges. Known for his extraordinary physical strength, he was a 'Nazarite', meaning he was devoted to God's service. This included vows not to drink wine and not to cut one's hair. Samson's wife Delilah betrayed him, cutting off his hair, after which he was deprived of his strength, his vow having been broken. He was imprisoned and tortured by the Philistines, but later, as his strength returned, he pushed down the pillars of their temple, causing it to collapse on him and on all who were gathered there.



Questions for reflection:

- These heroes often overcame great odds in their struggles, with God's help. Where in my life has God helped me through an 'impossible' situation?
- Do I truly believe that all things are possible with God? Do I pray for stronger faith, deeper trust in Him?

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MASSES THIS WEEK

Important: the church is closed until further notice, as public gatherings are suspended to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Mass will be livestreamed each day and will be available for viewing later in the day on our YouTube channel. All information and links at www.saintclares.co.uk

Date	Time	Occasion	Intention/Details
Sunday 29 th	10am	Fifth Sunday of Lent	People of the Parish
Monday	10am		Anne Connor RIP
Tuesday	10am		People of the Parish
Wednesday	10am		John Rainford RIP
Thursday	10am		TJ Joseph RIP
Friday	10am		Winifred Speight RIP
Saturday 4 th	10am		Bert Ainscough RIP
Sunday 5 th April	10am	Palm Sunday	Winifred Hamilton RIP

All Masses will be celebrated in private. A full timetable for this week can be found on the back page of the parish newsletter.

LATELY DEAD: Please pray for all who have died recently.

LITURGY OF THE HOURS: Sung Vespers and Benediction will be streamed live on our YouTube channel on Sunday at 4:30pm.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Available on our YouTube channel from Sunday.

ROSARY: Prayed after 10am Mass, Monday-Friday.

ANNIVERSARIES: Ray Hodges, Anne Connor, Tom Dickinson, Fr Odran Callan, Carol McCarthy, Olive Halliwell, Luigina Dawson, Bert Ainscough, Bill Hargreaves, Winifred Hamilton.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR MARCH: We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

Supporting your parish financially during the lockdown

Many people have asked how they can contribute to the parish financially at a time when almost all parish income has dried up. If you are still earning and able to contribute, you can save up offertory envelopes until the lockdown ends. Some people have asked for details of how to donate by standing order/BACS. If you contact us directly we can give the details, if you would like to help in this way. Thank you for thinking of us – please only contribute if you are able.

Update from Father Andrew

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all well and keeping your spirits up in this difficult situation. Let's continue to place our hope in the Lord, knowing that He turns everything to the good for us (Romans 8:28). I continue to pray each day for you all, for your loved ones and those who are suffering at this time. Please pray for me and for our parish, that God will help us all during this time.

I'm really grateful for the many messages I've received over the last few days. Many of you have commented how much the live stream of Mass means to you; it's good to know that, although not physically gathered, we are still praying with one another. Thank you for the encouragement you are giving me and James in the work we are doing at church. Away from the live streaming and times of prayer, I've been speaking to quite a lot of people on the phone, especially those who may be more isolated or vulnerable in some other way. Generally people are doing well and coping with this strange and unsettling situation. Please let me know if you, or anyone you know, needs anything, even if it's just a listening ear.

The Bishop issued a decree during the week, making some allowances for our current situation. For example, it gives a dispensation from our usual obligation to attend Sunday Mass – something which is clearly impossible at present. He reminds us, though, that we are not dispensed from the third commandment: “**Keep the sabbath day holy**”. Let's do all we can to mark out Sunday as a special day in our homes, making some more time for prayer, joining the live Mass if we are able to, and making a prayer of spiritual communion (see back page). The Bishop has also given a dispensation from our 'Easter duties' and from the usual requirement to do penance on a Friday – though on Good Friday itself we should try to abstain and fast as usual, if we are in good health.

The Food Bank is desperate for supplies, especially milk, toilet roll and toiletries, and tinned spaghetti, tinned fruit and tinned potatoes. If you're able to help, you can leave food on the presbytery doorstep at any time (rather than the usual monthly collection), and we will pass it on to them.

In the coming days I hope to put some more information online about what will happen during **Holy Week**, and how we might be able to celebrate this well in our homes this year. Please keep an eye on our website, social media and our YouTube channel for more information and ideas soon.

I am missing you all! Let's continue to pray for one another, for our parish, for our hospital, for all in need throughout the world. God bless you all. Fr Andrew.

A prayer of 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.

Timetable for our church this week

Sunday 29th March

Mass will be streamed live (visit www.saintclares.co.uk): 10am

Rededication of England to Our Lady: A service will be streamed live at 12noon

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be streamed live: 4-5pm

Sung Vespers and Benediction will be streamed live: 4:30pm

Stations of the Cross: a new set of reflections will be available on our YouTube channel from today.

Daily Timetable – Monday-Friday

Mass will be streamed live (visit www.saintclares.co.uk): 10am

A recording of the Mass will be available on our YouTube channel afterwards.

Rosary will be streamed live: 10:30am

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be streamed live: 4-5pm

Saturday 4th April

Mass will be streamed live (visit www.saintclares.co.uk): 10am

A recording of the Mass will be available on our YouTube channel afterwards.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be streamed live: 10:30am-12noon

Sunday 5th April: Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday Mass will be streamed live (visit www.saintclares.co.uk): 10am

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be streamed live: 4-5pm

Sung Vespers and Benediction will be streamed live: 4:30pm

Stations of the Cross: a new set of reflections will be available on our YouTube channel from today.