



Patronal Festival

The Lord be with you
and also with you

Hymn: For All the Saints

For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their Might;
thou, Lord, their Captain in the well fought fight;
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
we feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine.¹
Alleluia, Alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blessed.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
the saints triumphant rise in bright array;
the King of glory passes on his way.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
and singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost:
Alleluia, Alleluia!

William Walsham How (1823-1897)

Introduction and Confession:

Rejoice, people of God, praise the Lord! Let us sing praises in honour of all God's saints, in whose victory the angels rejoice and glorify the Son of God.

Since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely, looking to Jesus in penitence and faith.

**By your love, seen in your Son,
brought near by your Spirit;
take from us what we need carry no longer,
so that we may be free again
to choose to serve you,
and to be served by each other.**

Absolution:

May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by His Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Collect:

Eternal God,
whose servant Edmund kept faith to the end,
both with you and with his people,
and glorified you by his death:
grant us such steadfastness of faith
that, with the noble army of martyrs,
we may come to enjoy the fullness of the resurrection life;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

A Reading from the New Testament: Proverbs 20:28; 21:1-4, 7

Loyalty and faithfulness preserve the king,
and his throne is upheld by righteousness.
The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.
All deeds are right in the sight of the doer,
but the LORD weighs the heart.
To do righteousness and justice
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.
Haughty eyes and a proud heart—
the lamp of the wicked—are sin.
The violence of the wicked will sweep them away,
because they refuse to do what is just.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:34-39

³⁴ "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Reflection:

Before we had to once more shut our doors for public worship Geraldine Mullen had spoken to me about this years patronal festival. She had hoped to put up a display of all things related to St. Edmund. She had done some research and collected together information, some of it new to me I must say, for this purpose. The writings below are a summary by her of her findings. I hope you find them interesting reading, as I. As you will note St. Edmund is extremely relevant to our present situation.

"Some of you, who have been here a lot lot longer than I, may remember St. Edmund's Day in 1970. It was then that the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Rev David Say led a community service of celebration on the eleven hundredth anniversary of Edmund's martyrdom. So this year we are celebrating Edmund's eleven hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

As Edmund was born and lived such a long time ago, some of the details of his life are understandably ambiguous. However there are some things that are generally accepted.

Edmund was born about the year 840 and when he was a teenager – 14 or 15 - he became King of East Anglia in 855. It is accepted that Edmund was a good king. A huge invasion of Danish Vikings arrived in England in 865 and in 869/870 Edmund was captured. The Danes were pagan and insisted that Edmund renounce his Christian faith. Edmund refused and was killed. He was beaten, slashed with swords and then tied to a tree where Danish archers shot arrows into his body. As long as he was able, Edmund still professed his faith. Finally his tormentors cut off his head and threw it into bushes. The head was found safe by searchers following the cries of a wolf calling, "Here, here, here". When Edmund's head was reunited with his body, they both fused back together. This was the first of many miracles and explains why Edmund as a Christian martyr is now *Saint* Edmund and also why he is patron saint of wolves. In the current conditions we are more interested to discover that Saint Edmund is also the patron saint of pandemics. This arises from his instrument of martyrdom – arrows. In the Bible and in Christian tradition, the metaphor of arrows is used for infectious disease. The way Saint Edmund appears in medieval pictures suggests that Saint Edmund was venerated as a plague saint in medieval times.

Has Saint Edmund ever been successful in his role as protector against plagues and pandemics? The records suggest the answer is, "yes".

The church of Saint- Sernin in Toulouse amassed relics of numerous saints. (Relics might not mean actual bones. Relics might mean pieces of material that had been in contact with the saint.) In the 1630s Toulouse was in the grip of a plague. One by one they invoked all the saints whose relics they possessed. None had any effect until they invoked Saint Edmund. Then the plague ceased.

Jesuit priests at Bury Saint Edmunds wrote of a severe virus outbreak in 1892. Two priests made pilgrimages to the reputed place of martyrdom of Saint Edmund before the outbreak ended.

Interestingly and nearer to our present times, the Jesuits at Bury record that, on 7th January 1902, an outsider brought smallpox to the town. 14 people were infected and 6 died. A relic of Saint Edmund was carried privately through the town by Fr Jones during their lockdown. They then report that there were no further cases of smallpox in Bury Saint Edmunds.

A 1762 guide for pilgrims to Saint-Sernin includes a prayer to be said at the shrine of St Edmund for protection against infectious disease:

Lord, who by an incomprehensible effect of your mercy, accorded the blessed King Edmund the grace of victory over the enemies of your holy name, grant that by his prayers we may avoid the traps and the dangerous promptings of the enemy of salvation. "

Edmund, a king who won the hearts of his subjects by his care of the poor and his steady suppression of wrong-doing is an example to us all.

Reading about St. Edmund has always made me focus on what living a life of faith really means and has led me to realise how blessed we are to worship in a church dedicated to his name.

Edmund died a horrific bloodthirsty martyrs death refusing to deny Christ even though his suffering was immense, he suffered beyond our human comprehension, in fact rather than deny the Lord he called upon him in his pain.

A humble and devote character with such steadfast faith, all that Edmund did lives on in his name and we are honoured here to have a constant reminder of that.

Our gospel reading today is hard hitting and on the surface perhaps not the easiest read.

'Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household.... and so it goes on.

What is this all about you may well ask, it is enough to dampen the zeal of many an aspiring Christian and, indeed, of more seasoned believers. What it is about is

loyalty, commitment, costly discipleship, all of which Edmund had in bucket loads, and the abundant love of God. Much of what we have heard may seem far away from our life, our era and our church situation. This teaching comes from a time when the new wine of the kingdom was heady and hot. So how do we translate it for our age and place?

I would suggest thus, firstly Christianity involves commitment, and we should not pretend to ourselves or to new Christians that it is easy. Words from our gospel reading challenge us, maybe challenge our complacency but they can offer real comfort too.

Secondly, this passage speaks about the sort of situation where Christian witness may be painful. Whoever we are and wherever we live, that pain could affect and involve us. So we must be like St Edmund have courage and be steadfast in our faith and we will feel the abundant love of God.

The Creed:

We believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
he will come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessions:

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father

Heavenly Father we pray for the peace of the whole world,
for the welfare of the Holy Church of God,
and the unity of all.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We give thanks for St Edmund
for his steadfastness of faith,
his love and care of his subjects.
May we have such faith in you our loving Father.
Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father we lift to you our community,
all who live and work in West Kingsdown.
We pray for those who are sick in mind, body or spirit and we lift them to you,
Gill Girnham, Angie Skinner, Seamus McGeoghan, Andrew Coles, Edna Jones, Doris
Healey, Layaly Cordier, Karen Beale, Joy & Victor Johnson, David Mullen, Kim
Johnstone, Marion & Brian Dethridge, Julie, David Clegg, Angie Barnes, Ron White
and Christina.
Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for those that have recently died Lindsay O'Mahony and Doreen Mills and
those that mourn their lose. We remember those whose anniversary of death falls in
November Rita Farr, John Ebdon, John Patterson, Edith Noye, Arthur Lambert, Ron
Dansie, Sylvia Smith, Len Nicholson, Peggy Hudson, Jaqueline Cooper and Maud
Ware. May they rejoice with the saints in the fullness of eternal life.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Remembering all who have gone before us in faith,
and in communion with St Edmund and all the saints,
we commit ourselves, one another,
and our whole life to Christ our God. Amen

Merciful Father

**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn: Now Thank we all our God.

Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in Whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace, and guide us when perplexed;
And free us through all ills in this world, till the next!

All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,
The Son, and Him Who reigns with Them in highest Heaven—
The one eternal God, Whom earth and Heav'n adore;
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore

Martin Rinkart (1586-1649) trans. Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

The Blessing:

God give you grace to follow his saints in faith and hope and love; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and those whom you love, this day and for evermore. **Amen**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord

Thanks be to God. Amen

Acknowledgements

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