



**Second Sunday in Lent**

**21 February 2016**

**Sentence** Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. *Phil. 9.86*

**Collect**

Living Mystery, whose way is not ours,  
whose name cannot be bought or sold:  
lead us from justice  
without compassion  
and sacrifice without mercy  
to a love which nurtures and a grace without price;  
through Jesus Christ, the true Bread. **Amen.**

**A reading from the book of Genesis.**

*This text must be read with a warning: it cannot be used to support the unjust displacement of peoples from the land which is part of modern Israel. This reading combines three different themes: God's promise of an abundant offspring to Abraham; his promise of the land to Israel; and the sealing of that promise with a covenant ceremony. Genesis contains several stories of God's covenant with Abraham, all variants of the same tradition. Though fundamentalist protestant Christians use texts such as this to support the unjust and violent enforcement of Jewish possession of Palestine, orthodox Christian teaching is that God's promise has been fulfilled in Jesus, risen Christ who brings in the promised kingdom of a new humanity far surpassing the mere gift of land.*

The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the LORD came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as

righteousness. Then he said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.' But he said, 'O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.' He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire-pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.'

*Genesis 15.1-12,17-18*

Reader For the word of the Lord.  
**All Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 27 APBA Page 246**

*This psalm serves as a link between the first two readings. The fourth stanza begins with the words: "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!" For Abraham this land was the territory that his descendants were destined to occupy. For Christian believers this land is the kingdom of God, the "commonwealth of heaven" of which the second reading speaks.*

**A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.**

*The life of the age to come will not be a prolongation of this present life but an entirely new, transformed existence. This transformed existence is what Christ entered at his resurrection. But his resurrection is not merely an incident in his own personal biography; he entered as the "first fruits" (1 Cor. 15:20), that is, as the one who makes it possible for believers also to enter that existence after him.*

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

*Philippians 3.17-4.1*

Reader May your word live in us.

**ALL And bear much fruit to your glory.**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**ALL Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.**

God is faithful and will not let you be tested beyond your strength, so that you may endure it.

**ALL Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.**

Reader The Lord be with you.

**ALL And also with you.**

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

**ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

There were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.' Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."

*Luke 13.1-9*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord.

**ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Bible Readings next week Third Sunday in Lent**

Is. 55.1-9 Ps. 63.1-9 1 Cor. 10.1-13 Luke 13.31-35

**Prayer for the Week**

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Pray for the Faithful Departed**

We remember before God: Alexander Wakefield, Adrian Swan, Thomas Duncan, Stanford Ames, Wylie Ames, Victor Field, Peter Willers, Mariannus (Mac) Cuming, Barbara Edith Anthonisz, George Findlay & Heather Hume-Cook , *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

**Commemorations of the week**

**February 24 Mathias, apostle and martyr.** He was appointed to fill the post occupied by Judas Iscariot (Acts 1.15-26). He was a follower of Jesus for the whole of Jesus’ ministry and a witness of the resurrection. **February 27 George Herbert** (1593-1633). English parish priest, who is best known as a religious poet; one of the first devotional poets of the Church of England. A number of his hymns are in still sung.

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**‘I was sick and you visited me.’**

Can you visit a housebound parishioner who would like some conversation and company? All her other needs are covered. If we had a small team we could visit each week , taking turns. Two people have responded already, a team of four or five would be excellent. Please speak to the clergy.

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**Jesus, fig trees and patience...**

Did you know that fig trees take many years of patient nurture before they bear luscious fruit. Jesus clearly knew this when telling his parable of the impatient owner and the tenant farmer who pleaded for more time. Fruitful vines and fig trees only flourished if there was peace in the land. They came to symbolise the prosperity that peace brought. In the days of Solomon it was said, "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, everyone under their vine and fig-tree - at peace and unafraid"

