

The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

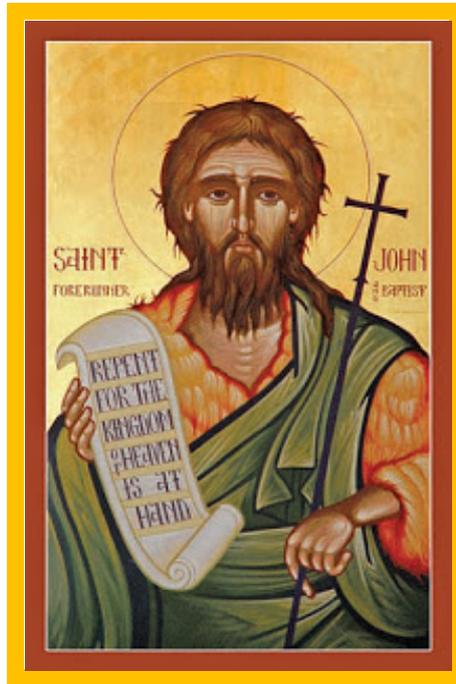
St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



St John the Baptist

The Parish Sunday Eucharist

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Sunday, 11th July 2021, at 10.00 a.m. at St. John's, Mortimer
and online at Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer thoughts: A Gruesome Banquet. Perhaps the first response to this Sunday's Gospel reading, and its gruesome banquet, is horror. It's the sordid story of the final hours of John the Baptist and his beheading for a frivolous promise made by Herod. John the Baptist was actually a channel of opportunity for grace before Herod and we are told that he 'liked to listen to John' but that seed fell on stony ground and the people around Herod, and his own unruly appetites, soon got in the way. Herod made an unwise promise and his pride would not let him back down. It's a familiar story. How often do we paint ourselves into corners and feel trapped by our pride and fear of losing face and then act out as though we had no freedom to be gracious and truthful and turn to the right? John's head was served up on a dish as if it were part of the menu and the malice and cruelty of that feast contrasts with the picture of the simple table where Jesus gathers his disciples with integrity to feed and care for them.

Again, in this passage Mark makes one of his 'sandwiches.' Here he inserts into his Gospel account this retrospective story of John the Baptist's beheading as the 'filler' in a sandwich of the mission of the 12 going out and then returning jubilantly when they see people turning to Jesus' way. So, why does Mark insert this story at this point? Clearly, it anticipates the violent death of Jesus and is too a warning to all who would embrace his mission that they also may have to suffer to live out the gospel and will need to pray for the courage and generosity required. St Mark is trying to prepare his readers to be strong in the face of the world's evil. He would have had in his mind the persecutions of Nero, but the story reminds every generation of the persecutions of their day. Whose head is being cut off today? Where are the heads of the voiceless, the dispossessed, the poor, the victims of war and the prisoners of conscience?

This Gospel story challenges us to consider what we can do about such evil. Sometimes we may feel that we can do little except pray for those treated unjustly and for all those children, women and men guilty only of standing up for them and for truth and faith and hope and love. Sometimes our prayer and compassion may reach out into action. If I were a character in the story, perhaps the soldier, would I simply do what I am told, or would I refuse and end up being beheaded myself? Will the example of John the Baptist help inspire me to find the courage to protest against injustices? And how might this story help me deepen in my prayer? Perhaps I might think of the vulnerable, the innocent, and the foolish - all those who are exploited to achieve the ends of others and pray that I might grow in compassion and in grace and truth? God bless, Paul

The Parish Sunday Eucharist

This Holy Memorial is known by various names: 1) 'The Eucharist' - which means 'Thanksgiving' - because Jesus offered himself in love; 2) 'the Lord's Supper' - or 'Breaking of the Bread' - because we celebrate it as a shared meal; 3) 'Holy Communion,' because we become one with Christ by receiving him; and 4) 'Holy Mass' - holy sending - because it gives us a mission: to go in peace to serve the Lord.

If you are not able to come to St John's please do share in this online service from your own home. May God bless us as we join to worship together. The present rules and guidelines about attendance, distancing, singing & speaking in churches will be followed carefully.

THE GATHERING SONG

**Alleluia, alleluia, hearts to heaven and voices raise.
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise.
He, who on the cross a victim, for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory, now is risen from the dead.**

**Alleluia, alleluia! Glory be to God on high;
Alleluia, to the Saviour, who has won the victory;
Alleluia, to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia, alleluia, to the triune Majesty.**

THE GATHERING

Priest In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

The priest may introduce the Eucharist.

THE GREETING

The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us. The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.

All The Lord be with you
And also with you.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

*We call to mind our sins to repent of them / turn from them and to ask forgiveness of God and each other.
The Invitation to Confession.*

As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of God's love,
revealed in Word and Sacrament,
let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

All I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do.

The Absolution

All + Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life.
Amen.

THE GLORIA

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Father!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Father!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!**

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to Christ Jesus!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to Christ Jesus!**

To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!

Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Spirit!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Spirit!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The prayer 'collects' our thoughts.

Priest Creator God,
you made us all in your image:
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts'(The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

THE FIRST READING - Ephesians 1: 3 - 14. - Read by Gill McInnes

The author of the Letter to the Ephesians is 'visionary' in how he sees Christ and his Church's mission and the possibilities for the world - and his images come thick and fast: heavenly places, election, adoption, inheritance etc. One that ties this letter to this Sunday's Gospel reading is 'mystery' - in v.9. Here the word does not denote secret rites or anything like that, but points to what once lay hidden, but now has been revealed: namely God's loving purpose for the world, which the author sees to be summed up in Jesus Christ. And he wants his reader to grasp that here, at last, is a good vision that we can all share.

Reader A reading from The Letter to the Ephesians.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Now we hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5: 10.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING - ST MARK'S GOSPEL 6: 14 - 29.

Mark prepares us to accept the possible consequences of Christian discipleship.

The Lord be with you.

All And also with you .

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.'

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the baptizer.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

At the end of the Gospel

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

We are a Eucharistic community - united around in word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. The sermon reflects on our readings and relates them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary life.

After the sermon there is a short period of silent reflection.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a 'thanksgiving people', a living community of his abiding self-giving love.

All We believe and trust in God the Father who made the world.

We believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world.

We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God. Amen

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for the needs of the Church's mission and for all people. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his intercessions before the Father for the needs of his Church and of all people. Our intercessions flow from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercession, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; for the departed. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God's saving love.

Priest: In the power of the Holy Spirit of God, and in union with Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Father.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith, strengthen Justin our Archbishop, Steven our bishop, Olivia our area bishop, our benefice, our Church schools of St Mary's and St John's, and all your Church in the service of Christ, that we may live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world...

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen, our Government and our District and Village Councils. Give wisdom to all in authority and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and peace that people everywhere may honour one another and seek the common good...

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, Your Son shared the life of a family: in your love bless and protect our families, friends, and neighbours and help us to learn how to serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us...

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit...; give them hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation...

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you all who have died recently ...

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we rejoice in the fellowship of Blessed Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all your saints and we commend ourselves and all people to your unfailing love...

Priest Merciful Father,

All Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful - a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest Christ is our peace.

He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.

We meet in his name and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All And also with you.

THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

Priest **BREAD**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

All Blessed be God for ever.

WINE

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All Blessed be God for ever.

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our gratitude and our dedication to your service.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

*The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts.
The priest washes hands as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.*

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Priest Amen.

Lord, by your grace may our remembrance of John the Baptist's example help us to receive your transforming gifts in this sacrament and always to rejoice in the abundant fruits that they bring forth.

All **Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said by the priest on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

The Preface praises God for his mighty acts:

And now we give you thanks because at the Last Supper, as he sat at table with his apostles, he gave us this memorial of his passion to bring us its saving power until the end of time. In this sacrament you feed your people and strengthen them in holiness, so that the family of humankind may come to walk together in the light of faith and in one communion of love.

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. He gave his life for us upon the cross. He shows us the way to live. Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood. On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

 'This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

 'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this to remember me.'

So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life. As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.
And now with Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, and all your saints, we give you glory, through Jesus Christ and in the strength of your Holy Spirit, today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Priest Looking for the coming of his kingdom, as our Saviour taught us, so let us pray:

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is 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.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17) Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread.'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

Priest We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.**

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the sign of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when communion can only be given in one 'kind' when we can come to church.

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ **Amen.**

THE SONG DURING HOLY COMMUNION

**Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love;
where there is injury your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt true faith in you.**

Refrain:

**Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love with all my soul.**

**Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light;
And where there's sadness, ever joy.**

Refrain:

**Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
in giving to all men that we receive;
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

Refrain:

After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray

*The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom.
We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.*

Priest God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

All The Lord be with you.
and also with you.

THE BLESSING

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
+ and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

All Go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

SONG

**Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing
if our God our Father be.**

**Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy;
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy;
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.**

Please donate regularly to support the Church's mission and work. *The church here needs your help in order to serve our villages, our diocese, our nation and our world in the future. Our doors have been closed due to Covid 19 and with no regular Government or Church of England funding we have lost significant income. Please see the website to see how to give efficiently.*

