"O Lord thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art
stronger than I, and thou hast prevailed. I have become a
laughing-stock all the day; everyone mocks me. For whenever
I cry out, I shout, 'Violence and destruction'. For the word
of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day
long. If I say, 'I will not mention him or speak anymore his
name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in
my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.'
(Jer. 20:7-9)

THE HOLY CITY, JERUSALEM, is threatened and the king-
dom of Judah is on its last legs. It is Jeremiah's unhappy task to
be the local doomsday prophet. We have them today and we
don't put them in the stocks, they make huge sums of money from
their gloomy prognostications. But Jeremiah has just got out of
the stocks where he has provided good fun for the terrified
population who view him as a cross between a traitor and a
heretic. On getting out he sings the song that was our first
lesson this morning. (Jer. 20:7-13)

It is easy to make facile parallels between these events and
our own day, especially if we see the enemy as our enemy and
the threats as the threats against us. Maybe I shall do just that
myself.

Jerusalem, the Holy City, is under dire threat, almost siege.
So, today, is the New Jerusalem, the Holy Catholic Church. As
then, so today the kings and priests try to come to terms with
Babylon or they try to hide from the threat by hysterical image-
builing or they try to buy time by handing over the treasures
of the Temple. Meanwhile, as the Master said, "even the elect
are deceived".

Bishops, senior clergy, diocesan pundits, committee men,
theologians, ecclesiastical and civil servants and trustees are
among those who seem to do all in their power to compromise with Babylon, which is the threat of secular materialism. We abdicate from ancient rights, we bow before the cyclones of broken marriages, we readjust our morals, we erect altars for Shinto and have religious festivals with Buddhists, Jews, and Mohammedans, and we admit radical women’s lib to the steps of the altar itself. Then, like Zedekiah and his priest Pashhur, we try to build images of our new outlook and new ways. So we put out posters and press releases and do television things about how broadminded we Christians now are about everything from homosexuality to abortion, from sex before marriage to open shopping on Sundays, from social services to the needy and the poor, to swinging retreats. We feel determined to justify ourselves before secular man as a useful wing with which his collapsing society may yet remain airborne for a little longer. We’ll be gone after that!

Then finally we rush to give away the treasures of the Temple. So we surrender churches, rectories, halls, schools, parish plant, Lenten disciplines, beautiful liturgy, music, art, poetry to satisfy secular man’s insatiable appetite for greedy possession of everything at his own political or doctrinal level.

It is precisely here, then, that many of us who still frequent a church like this with an unashamed glory, beauty, and mystery find ourselves out in the cold with poor old Jeremiah saying things like “violence and destruction”. The new churchmen laugh, sneer, and rejoice that we put ourselves outside the promotion race, that our conservative obtuseness seems to be on the outer of conventions, synods, and majority votes. Actually, the funny thing is that again and again I have found in my diocese that this very conservatism, if coupled with a genuine pastoral love and an evangelistic zeal, makes for crowds at altars, and only three weeks ago I celebrated Mass in a woolstore in the middle of a freezing winter for 5,000. That is why, like Jeremiah, if I do or say nothing, “there is inside my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary, of holding it in, and I cannot”.

So, much, then, for preamble; what is my Gospel for you this eucharistic morning?

First of all, let us realize right from the start that today — this bleak period of division, unhappiness, and weak leadership, of false doctrine and sentimental petticoat sacramentals, of hesitancy and betrayal and desperate apostasy — this is the contemporary stuff of salvation, redemption, and holiness. This is just a period when the dustbins of Calvary have not been collected and emptied for awhile. Today is real; yesterday when we seemed to be winning must now be set aside, except for happy memory, as what our Australian aborigines call dream time. “Now is the day of salvation and it is nearer than when we believed,” said St Paul from out of an environment even more confusing and desperate than our own. For far too long catholics had thought that they had conquered, and that the great catholic design was going to sweep the whole church along with the increased profits of the ecclesiastical outfitters. We nursed visions of every Anglican getting into the confessional, we established mid-west churches to look as much like this one as we could. We even got most of the bishops to put on copes and mitres with varying degrees of aesthetic effect. We failed. The real Faith never got through, sometimes not even to us who knew every genuflection point in the road map of Liturgy. But failure is sometimes better than triumph. If we had won, in fact, I can’t help wondering if we would have had any real spiritual strength of the Faith that we say we love so much. I quote some words of Simon Barrington Ward in the CMS newsletter for March this year: “God is only God, truly and personal, when he meets us not in some grand design, but in our failure to achieve any design. On the Cross he bears our brokenness and incompleteness and meets us in our confusion. Only in that meeting is the real submission made possible at long last for us all; only then can we begin to envisage the birth of a world restored.”

Then, secondly, if we have another look at the reasons for our concern and discontent we may find that a good few of them are in fact aggravated by our own pride, sin, and boorish obstinacy. We may, for instance, get very angry when bishops or conventions or theologians tell us that the great Creeds are outmoded symbols, models for the scrap heap, that the Holy Scripture is an unreliable creature of its own time and limited knowledge, that the Liturgy with its Tudor language and dignity is properly scrapped for what some people in our part of the world are calling “pidgen English version”. We are the most angry, angry enough to rend the robe of Christ’s body, when
misguided prelates believe that they have ordained ladies into the priesthood. I have heard, since coming to your country, that some Episcopal bishops have not only done this but they themselves are also divorced men and in some extraordinary manner married to another partner. These are some of the things that get us feeling very bloody-minded and longing not only to cry out “violence and destruction” like Jeremiah, but also to invoke the Lord of Hosts to throw a few thunderbolts at certain seminaries and episcopal conventions as well. But there is never any such ready divine retribution, thank God! Others of us are torn terribly between leaving the fellowship, getting away from it all and luxuriating in our own individual infallibility and sanctified prejudices. Owen Chadwick, the new Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, England, has said, “No faith without a Church, no faith without a context, no faith without a tradition”. This is true. Our own faith must remain sure, informed, stimulated, and deep. Truth has little to do with our personal or ecclesiastical faith, for only a tiny grain of faith is necessary for salvation. Truth in its final reality is of the Nature of God, never of mere mankind, not even Anglican mankind. But what we hold in the catholic revelation of the Lord is to be held in the context of family, of church, of the tradition. We are not free to change these things to suit the world or fashionable philosophies or theologies. And before we get really hot under the chasuble and collar, let us remember that the only truly catholic mark that our Lord gave to his Church by which it might be identified in the world was the mark of our love for one another.

Finally, then, my brothers and sisters, and perhaps because our Jerusalem, the Holy Catholic Church, is guaranteed by Jesus Christ to withstand all assaults of the devil, unlike the old Jerusalem of Jeremiah’s day, let us get together to examine and search through just what we have left.

Catholics have been dealt some heavy blows. The Roman Church has its problems, what with the eager “nouveau protestant Vat II lunatics”, its Latin Mass devotees and its charismatic nuns. Anglo-catholicism has lost its main anchorage and has split into fragments, each jealous of whatever insight or experience others in the stream are having. We have had Satan in full war paint amongst our candlesticks and incense pots. We have sat back very often content to watch the Church go to hell as long as our own pet devotions or parish church was unaffected. But now we are all affected whether we like it or not. If we still have any glimpse at all of God, any intimation of effective grace, any experience of mystical prayer, any deep love for the Holy Mother whose name this great and famous church bears with humble pride, then we must look very carefully at what still remains to us in the treasury of blessing. We still have the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, the sacramental Eucharist for everlasting life. We still have the life-giving Gospel and the benefit of blessing, prayers of the saints, and, in this place, glorious worship. This contribution the whole Church must not be allowed to miss, and our own personal and private lives in Christ should bear constant witness to being people who are living with Jesus. I quote now from a book written by a Mirfield Father in 1910:

“It is God we are seeking for: the other world, which alone can give reality to this, alone can invest duty with enduring meaning, can find for beneficence a certain value, for knowledge an ordered place, and flash upon the shows of earthly beauty some hint at least of the eternal loveliness. Men bid us limit our aims and hopes to this life, and turn from the dazzling mirage of the other. Our answer is that we cannot... It is impossible. It may not be. For God created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity.”

Even Jeremiah was able to sing in his otherwise sad song, “Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord; for he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers”.

So we shall do just that, as this Mass proceeds to dive deeper into the life-giving Passion of our Master, as we renew our own loyalty and dedication to him and to his holy but often ravaged Church. Let us still be here, at least, when he comes again crashing through the barriers of bread and wine. Above all, be not too anxious, for too much anxiety will seem to make our faith meaner than our worst enemies might suppose. Shadows of doubt, superstition, schism, heresy, and malpractice have hovered over the Church before as they did over the Saviour himself. And I believe that his promise to be with us
still holds fast; we have nothing to fear, unless, of course, we fret, and allow our souls to curdle in self-pity and a mourning for a time in Church life that has now passed forever. These are now serious days, maybe the last days. We are men and women marked with the Cross; I believe that it is now the time to take it up. This is the way to salvation, to truth, and to a new Church that is catholic and apostolic and not bewitched or seduced by the world's standards to which it seems that so many of our ersatz leaders and our unthinking brethren have so sadly succumbed. The reason is mainly because they have never known Jesus, his Mother, his forgiveness, and his Eucharist.

Continue to search for God, use the means of grace so beautifully presented here to the full. Reach out in prayer, love, and contact with the heathen, but never desert the Church for which our blessed Saviour gave his life that it might be the one mighty sign of love in a hate-filled world. This is our vocation as children of God. Let us take it up, even as he raises us once again from the dead in this life-giving Supper, the Marriage Feast of the Lamb of God who never fails to take away the sins of the world.

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FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISM

"As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."
July 7—Amy Grace Lewis

RECEIVED BY CANONICAL TRANSFER

"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and Fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."
June 28—J. Henson Markham       September 1—Charles Ian Barrett

★

ECM CONGRESS

October 26-27 — St Thomas Church, New York

BIBLICAL STUDIES — XLI

THE END FOR JUDAH WAS NOT FAR OFF. Last time, you will remember, we considered the career of Hezekiah (who died about 687 B.C.), and we said that he was one of the two conspicuous exceptions to the rule of general decline which marked the last two centuries of Judah's history. Hezekiah, we noted, managed to achieve a certain measure of national independence and religious reform during a brief period of Assyrian preoccupation elsewhere; but even he faced Assyrian wrath for this attempt when the attention of that power was once again free to be directed towards him — there was at least one, and probably two, invasions of Judah by the ferocious Sennacherib, the first of which reduced the entire country save Jerusalem itself, which was spared only by complete capitulation and the payment of a ruinous tribute. The second repeated the success of the first, and this time Jerusalem would not have been spared save for the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army, presumably by plague, at the last moment.

Hezekiah died about a year after this reprieve, which may have spared him further Assyrian reprisals. He was succeeded by his son Manasseh, who attempted no further resistance and was, clearly, an Assyrian vassal pure and simple — which included, of course, the worship of the Assyrian gods alongside the Lord, a situation for which he was duly condemned by the writers of the books of the Kings. And yet there was little choice — Sennacherib had been murdered by this time, but was succeeded by his equally ferocious and energetic younger son, Esarhaddon, against whom resistance would have been (at least humanly speaking) futile. Manasseh died about 642, and was succeeded by his son Amon, who presumably continued his father's policy until his own assassination two years later in one of the very few attempts to supplant (it would appear) the Davidic line, though this is unclear. What is certain is that there was a counter-coup by the "people of the land" — which in this instance probably means the landed gentry rather than the peasantry — who set up Amon's eight-year-old son Josiah in his father's place. The year was 640 B.C., and Josiah is the second of our great exceptions to the general decline and fall of Judah. Indeed, he was to prove the last genuinely independent king of that country, and his reign was to feature both political revival and expansion.
reformer, par excellence; in Judaeo history, and his efforts represented the most thorough-going attempt to recover the full Mosaic tradition ever tried.

We know little of his early years, when presumably there was a regency which followed a cautious policy with regard to Assyria. But Josiah's elevation was apparently all along tied in somehow with a policy of national regeneration, and there is some evidence that as early as his eighth regnal year (when he would have been about sixteen) there was a decision to shift out of the Assyrian orbit as soon as — and as much as — was possible.

In his twelfth year the opportunity came, and he annexed — whether in a sudden move all at once or in stages over a period of years is uncertain — the provinces of what had been the Northern Kingdom. He was able to do this because, with a remarkable suddenness, the Assyrian colossus had begun to disintegrate under dual pressure from the Medes in the north and the resurgent Babylonians (Chaldaeans) to the south. Already her hold on her western provinces (i.e., Syria-Palestine) was weak. It is even possible, though not provable, that Josiah annexed the northern provinces as a nominal Assyrian vassal, and that this was allowed (though Assyria was really powerless to do much about it anyway) in an effort to keep Josiah as at least a formal ally. Be that as it may, at least by 622 even the formal allegiance had evaporated — Assyria was in her death-throes, the Neo-Babylonian successor-state was still consolidating its victories at home, and Judah, for the last time, was left to itself. Josiah took full advantage of the respite to launch a programme of political expansion and, more importantly for the history of later Judaism, a thorough-going religious revival.

The revival was given impetus and direction by the discovery of a lawbook (scroll) in the Temple, in Josiah's eighteenth regnal year (622), during the course of repairs. This fact itself indicates that a religious revival of Yahwism as the state religion was already under way — which was why the Temple was being repaired in the first place — so the lawbook could not be said to have sparked the revival; but it undeniably impressed upon the king and his advisors the great seriousness of their enterprise the direction in which it would move.

What was this lawbook? The general consensus of scholars today is that it represents some form of our book of Deuteronomy, either in whole or (more likely) in part. And while at one time it was thought by many to be a kind of "pious fraud" — something concocted, that is, by the religious party and then hid in the Temple precisely in order that it might be suddenly "found", this view is today generally discredited (for a number of reasons, including linguistic ones). Almost certainly the book emanated from the Northern Kingdom and was a collection of ancient legal traditions, preserved in the Northern prophetic circles, which had been collected and edited in the last days of the Northern Kingdom and then brought south by refugees after the collapse of that kingdom and the fall of its capital, Samaria, in 721 B.C. One of the great emphases of Deuteronomy is the need for one single national cult-centre as the only legitimate place for sacrificial worship — the "place where the Lord your God will cause his name to dwell" — and it can hardly be coincidental that that became also one of the great themes of Josiah's reform, which, of course, suited his political needs to make Jerusalem paramount quite well.

The reform involved a thorough-going repudiation of pagan practices, both of the Assyrian-Mesopotamian sort (vestiges of the Assyrian political ascendancy) and of the local variety (Baalism and syncretistic forms of corrupt Yahwism). The Temple, as we have seen, was repaired and refurbished, and the altars of alien gods were removed. The pagan shrines were destroyed and their personnel — the eunuch-priests and the sacred-harlots (of both sexes) — were put to death. Astrology and the whole astral cult was suppressed. And, as we noted above, the local countryside shrines of the Lord were also suppressed, partly because Deuteronomy dictated it, partly because their Yahwism was so often (and so liable) to be infiltrated and corrupted by the incurable peasant inclination to placate the fertility deities, which meant either that the Lord was turned into one himself, or that they were worshipped alongside him as his "heavenly court". Be that as it may, the shrines went (Hezekiah had tried the same thing, with little success), and their priesthooods, where legitimate, were integrated so far as possible with the Temple priesthood at...
Jerusalem. The “heretical” shrines in the territory of the old Northern Kingdom, however — presumably because they were virtually equated with paganism in spite of their nominal Yahwism — were totally desecrated, and their priests were put to death. Divination, necromancy, and magic of all kinds were proscribed, likewise on pain of death. It seemed almost as if a new age of David were to dawn — an age of political security and religious purity.

But it was not to be. Assyria’s fall, as we have said, came at the hand of Medes and Babylonians. The latter now contested the control of Syria (including Palestine) with Egypt, which featured now, ironically, as an Assyrian ally. Pharaoh Neco II marched his army to Carchemish on the Euphrates in a vain effort to prevent the Assyrian collapse and the (consequent) Babylonian ascendency. At Megiddo Josiah tried to stop him — whether as an ally of Babylon or acting alone we do not know. He may have slowed the Egyptians, but he did not stop them, and in the battle he was killed. With this action ended both the religious reform and all hope for Judah’s independent existence. The year was 609 B.C.

Josiah was succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz, who reigned only three months and then was deposed by Pharaoh in favour of his brother Eliakim, who took the throne-name of Jehoiakim. Neco may have failed at Carchemish, but for the time he was master of the western Mediterranean lands, and Jehoiakim was nothing but an Egyptian vassal, his land under a heavy tribute.

The real threat, however, came from the East. Pharaoh’s hold on Syria-Palestine was more apparent than real, and in Babylon great Nebuchadnezzar bided his time. In 605, while not yet king, he fell on the Egyptians at Carchemish and utterly routed them — a victory he followed up at Hamath to the south, which effectively ended Egyptian power in the western Mediterranean area. Though delayed by a need in the summer of 605 to return to Babylon and assume the throne at the death of King Nabopolassar, his ultimate advance was inexorable — down through Syria and the Philistine plain. Jehoiakim chose this moment — somewhat prudently! — to change allegiance. He was now a Babylonian vassal, though (subsequent events would prove) an unwilling one. Nebuchadnezzar continued on his way south. In 601, however, on the frontiers of Egypt, though the battle was inconclusive, he was nonetheless checked by Pharaoh Neco and temporarily withdrew to Babylon to plan again. Jehoiakim revolted, and the miscalculation was fatal. Nebuchadnezzar was for a time otherwise occupied, but late in 598 his forces invaded Judah. Within three months the city of Jerusalem surrendered — Jehoiakim having died (or been assassinated) in the interim, and his young son Jehoiachin having been placed on the throne — and the king, his mother, and most of the royal administration and the cream of the citizenry were taken captive to Babylon. The young king’s uncle, Mattaniah, was installed in his place as a Babylonian vassal under the throne-name of Zedekiah. He was the last king of Judah.

Time and space run short, and we must compress our story. Leaving aside the ins and outs and the events which gave rise to it, Zedekiah led a revolt against Babylon in 589, trusting (against the impassioned advice of the Prophet Jeremiah) in Egyptian help. By January of the following year, Jerusalem was under siege, and one by one the strongholds in the rest of the country were reduced. The siege was briefly raised while the Babylonians marched to head off an Egyptian relief force, but as always the Egyptians were a broken reed to lean on (as Jeremiah bravely but unpopularly kept saying), and soon the Babylonians were back in force. In July of 587, when the city had been reduced to near famine, the Babylonians breached the walls. Zedekiah fled through the night towards the Jordan, but was captured at Jericho and brought before Nebuchadnezzar, where he witnessed the execution of his sons before his own eyes were put out and he was dragged in chains to imprisonment and an early death in Babylon. A month later, at Nebuchadnezzar’s orders, Jerusalem was burned, its walls levelled, its leading officials and priests executed, and the bulk of the population — at least its upper elements — ordered deported to Babylon. A Judean nobleman, Gedaliah, was made governor over what was left, and though he seems to have been a good man, trying to make the best of a bad situation for his people, he was soon assassinated by a royalist die-hard. His court, fearing Babylonian reprisal, fled to Egypt, taking the unwilling Jeremiah with them. It was the end of Judah and the beginning of modern Judaism; and it is also (I am sorry to say) the end of this series.

J.P.B.
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CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

1. Su. THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH
   *High Mass with Procession 11*
2. M. The Holy Guardian Angels
3. Tu. St Teresa of Lisieux, 1897
4. W. St Francis of Assisi, Friar, 1226
5. Th. Of Pentecost XX
6. F. St Bruno, Abbot of the Grande Chartreuse, 1101
7. Sa. The Holy Rosary of our Lady

8. Su. PENTECOST XXI
9. M. Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1253
10. Tu. St Paulinus, First Archbishop of York, 644
11. W. Requiem
12. Th. St Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, 709
13. F. St Edward the Confessor, King of England, 1066
14. Sa. Of our Lady

15. Su. PENTECOST XXII
16. M. Requiem
17. Tu. St Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch & Martyr, c. 115
18. W. SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST
19. Th. St Frideswide, Abbess of Oxford (8th c.)
20. F.
21. Sa. Of our Lady

22. Su. PENTECOST XXIII
23. M. SAINT JAMES OF JERUSALEM, MARTYR, c. 115
24. Tu. St Raphael the Archangel
25. W. SS. Crispin & Crispinian, Martyrs of Soissons, 287
26. Th. St Alfred the Great, King of the West Saxons, 899
27. F. Requiem
28. Sa. SAINT SIMON & SAINT JUDE, APOSTLES

29. Su. PENTECOST XXIV
30. M. Requiem
31. Tu. Vigil of All Saints

MUSIC FOR OCTOBER

OCTOBER 1—DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH
   Missa Choralis .................................. Franz Liszt (1811-1886)
   Domine Deus .................................... McNeil Robinson, 1975
   Ave verum corpus .................................. McNeil Robinson, 1976
   5:30 p.m.
   George Novak, organ

OCTOBER 8—PENTECOST XXI
   Missa Ich stund an einem Morgen .... Jacob Handl (1550-1591)
   Deus, Deus meus .................................. Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
   Laudate, pueri, Dominum ............................ Anonymous, 15th Century
   5:30 p.m.
   Edward Thompson, organ

OCTOBER 15—PENTECOST XXII
   Missa brevis .................................. Benjamin Britten (1913-1977)
   O salutaris hostia ............................... Jean Langlais (1907-
   Jesu dulcis memoria .................................. I
   5:30 p.m.
   Dennis Keene, organ

OCTOBER 22—PENTECOST XXIII
   Jugendmesse .................................. Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
   Venite, exultemus Domino .... Jan Pieter Sweelinck (1562-1621)
   O bone ........................................ Heinrich Schuetz (1585-1672)
   5:30 p.m.
   McNeil Robinson, organ

OCTOBER 29—PENTECOST XXIV
   Missa Je suis desheritée ............ Nicholas Gombert (1490-1556)
   Jubilate Deo ................................. Guillaume Bouziqnac (1610-1649)
   O sacrum convivium ............................. Oliver Messiaen (1908-
   5:30 p.m.
   Michael Thompson, organ

* ALTAR FLOWER MEMORIALS

October 1—Dedication, Hallie & Edgar Wilson
October 8—Pentecost XXI, Departed members of the McGrane Family
October 15—Pentecost XXII, Wallace & Florence Brackett
October 22—Pentecost XXIII, Joseph & Phyllis Eagan
October 29—Pentecost XXIV, John Gilbert Winant
SERVICES

SUNDAYS
Morning Prayer .......................... 7:10 a.m.
Mass ..................................... 7:30, 9:00, and 10:00 a.m.
High Mass with Sermon ................. 11:00 a.m.
Mass ..................................... 5:00 p.m.
Evensong and Benediction ............... 6:00 p.m.

WEEKDAYS
Morning Prayer* .................................. 7:10 a.m.
Mass daily ................................. 7:30 a.m.* and 12:10 and 6:15 p.m.
Evening Prayer ......................... 6:00 p.m.

*Except Saturday

Other services during the week and on festivals as announced on the preceding Sunday.

CONFESSIONS

DAILY, 12:40-1 p.m., also
FRIDAY, 5-6 p.m.
SATURDAY, 2-3 and 5-6 p.m.
SUNDAY, 8:40-9 a.m.

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