

Readings continued

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 21.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Philippians 2:6-11.

This text is not original to Paul's writing for it is a 'hymn' that had already been adopted by Christian communities and employed in worship. This 'hymn', like others that are inserted into Paul's writings, constitutes a mini-creed, a proclamation of some significant aspect of Christ's identity and mission. In this particular text we are brought into a meditation on the humility and obedience of Christ. There is an interplay of two themes: Christ as the Second Adam, and Christ as the Servant of God. The First Adam was disobedient and asserted his independence. The Second Adam is obedient and trusting, properly dependent and reliant on God. We are made in the image and likeness of God. Obedience to God does not diminish our identity. We are ennobled and fulfilled by our allegiance. In Christ we find our way beyond our own self-fulfilment, toward a concern for the fulfilment of all others.

"His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave."

"But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names."

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Christ was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all names.

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Luke 22:14 – 23:56.

The Passion Narratives in each of the gospels encapsulate the climax of the major themes. Luke considerably expands the account of the Last Supper, with descriptors on the foundations of the kingdom and on future missionary activity. Leadership in the kingdom is a matter of service and must never become a matter of adopting earthly dignities nor exercising earthly power. Those closest to Jesus (his 'ministers') will have a particular duty to stand with him in the midst of trials and sufferings for the sake of the entire community, the Church. Peter will at first fail in this but then he will repent and go on to become the source of strength that binds the others together. On the Mount of Olives Jesus commanded his disciples to pray so as not to enter into temptation. This command falls upon us all and we should pray that our faith will endure. We must follow the example of Simon of Cyrene and carry the Cross 'behind our Lord'. Luke stresses repentance and forgiveness, exemplified where Luke describes how Peter wept 'bitterly' for his failure. The women of Jerusalem weep for Jesus. One of the thieves commits himself to Jesus at the last. From the Cross Jesus forgives his executioners. The pagan Roman Centurion gives glory to God in recognition of what he has witnessed. The crowds depart the scene of the crucifixion with grief and repentance. Luke emphasises love and peace in the midst of the grotesque turmoil. It is not the horror and beastliness of the execution that prevail. The gentleness of Jesus remains intact even when delivering reproaches. The final human cry of Jesus gives way to a perfect and loving acceptance of his Father's providential will – "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

The Institution of the Eucharist / The Treachery of Judas Foretold / Who is the Greatest / The Reward Promised to the Apostles / A Time of Crisis / The Mount of Olives / The Arrest / Peter's Denials / Jesus Mocked by the Guards / Jesus Before the Sanhedrin / Jesus Before Pilate / Jesus Before Herod / Jesus Before Pilate Again / The Way to Calvary / The Crucifixion / The Crucified Christ is Mocked / The Good Thief / The Death of Jesus / After the Death / The Burial.

When the hour came Jesus took his place at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; because I tell you, I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

It was about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Temple was torn right down the middle; and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." With these words he breathed his last.

Parish Contacts

The Priory 67 Talbot St. Canton, Cardiff

tel: (029) 20 230 492

Email address for both parishes: canton@rcadc.org

Canon Peter Collins

e-mail: peter.collins@rcadc.org

Deacon Professor Maurice Scanlon

e-mail: maurice.scanlon@rcadc.org

tel (029) 2021 2651

Deacon Christian Mahoney

E-mail: christianmahoney2@gmail.com

tel 07764515864

Deacon Elliot Hanson

e-mail: Elliot.hanson@rcadc.org

Monsignor Canon John Maguire

Retired Priest in Residence at Holy Family

Website: cardiffwestcatholics.org.uk

Bank details for standing orders are as follows:

Account name: Archdiocese of Cardiff

Sort code: 20-18-23 (for both)

St Mary's Account No: 03285375

Holy Family Account No: 63656861

St Mary's SVP contact number 07731847622.

Parish Safeguarding Reps

Mrs Ellery Hennessy (Holy Family)

Mr Jack Meggitt-Phillips (St Mary of the Angels)

Primary Headteachers:

Holy Family

Mrs Louise Mills Tel: 20565354

St Mary's

Miss Claire Russell Tel: 2022 5680

Secondary Headteachers:

Corpus Christi

Mr Patrick Brunnock Tel: 20761893

Mary Immaculate

Mr Huw Powell Tel: 2059 3465

St David's 6th Form College

Mr Mark Leighfield Tel: 20498555

Pray for the Sick

Holy Family: Catherine Driscoll, Kay & Paul Parris, Bernard Perry, Mary Bodman, Valentine, Vivian Miller, Collette Griffin, Brian Webster, Henry Fernandez, Susanna, Chris Collins, Zaid Saffo, Joseph Stancombe, Peter Macpherson.

St Mary's: Fr Christopher Delaney, Bethan Williams, Jean Allen, Madison Lane, Marian Lamb, Nadasiri Ifada, Cecily Hughes, James Church, Anthony Jackson, Tom Hopkins, Margaret Griffiths, Joanne Coakley, Helen Ward, Ben Foster, Carina Foster, Maria Sullivan, Mary D'Alpa, Patricia Sadka, Mary Williams, Donald Rees, Michael McLoughlin, Jacob Callaghan, Martin Jones, Connie Greck, Owen Williams and Andrew Nash.

Holy Family & St Mary of the Angels

Keyston Rd, Fairwater CF5 3NP

Kings Rd, Canton CF11 9BX

10th - 17th April 2022 Palm Sunday (Cycle C)

Readings for Palm Sunday

GOSPEL FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE LORD'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

Luke 19:28-40.

Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. Now when he was near Bethphage and Bethany, close by the Mount of Olives as it is called, he sent two of the disciples, telling them, 'Go off to the village opposite, and as you enter it you will find a tethered colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you are to say this, 'The Master needs it'. The messengers went off and found everything just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owner said, "Why are you untying that colt?" and they answered, "The Master needs it." So they took the colt to Jesus, and throwing their garments over its back they helped Jesus on to it. As he moved off, people spread their cloaks in the road, and now, as he was approaching the downward slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole group of disciples joyfully began to praise God at the top of their voices for all the miracles they had seen. They cried out: "Blessings on the King who comes, in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens!" Some Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Master, check your disciples", but he answered, "I tell you, if these keep silence the stones will cry out."

St Luke depicts the entry into Jerusalem as the joyful conclusion to the great journey Jesus has undertaken. Luke has been explicit in describing how the journey was definitively to the death. Jesus is accompanied by his Apostles and surrounded by a multitude of disciples who are rejoicing as they recall the miracles. Jesus is acclaimed as the king who has come in the name of the Lord. The song of praise provides an echo of the proclamation offered by the Angels at the Lord's Nativity. Jesus is in the company of his friends. We are called upon to join that company.

Isaiah 50:4-7.

This extract from the Book of Isaiah is part of a mysterious series of poems concerning a 'Servant of the Lord' whose mission it is to reconcile Israel to the Lord and to bring God's salvation to the nations of the world. This 'Servant' will take to himself the burden created by the sins of others, he will suffer in place of sinners. Jewish scholars debated as to whether this figure should be understood as being Isaiah himself, or as the nation of Israel suffering at the hands of her neighbours, or as some future individual. With the perspective of Christian faith, we can clearly understand that Christ is the 'Suffering Servant' prophesied by Isaiah. Through his passion and death, Christ takes upon himself the burden of our sins. He accepts humiliation but is exalted through his resurrection. Jesus Christ draws us to himself and thus leads us from humiliation to exaltation. We can also rightly see these great poems as meditations on any undeserved suffering that is patiently borne by us as a result of our trust in the Lord. Our sufferings can and should be offered in communion with Christ for the salvation of the world.

"For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle."
"I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be ashamed."

Continued opposite

Holy Family Masses

Sunday: Palm Sunday (10th April)

6pm Vigil Mass Nonie & Frederick Colbert

11am Michael & Elizabeth McMahon

Tuesday: (12th April)

9.30am

Thursday: Holy Thursday (14th April)

7.00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

(Intentions of the Archbishop)

Friday: Good Friday (15th April)

12.00pm Stations of the Cross

3.00pm Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

Sunday: Easter Sunday (17th April)

8.30pm EASTER VIGIL MASS AT ST MARY'S

11am Intentions of the Holy Father

St Mary's Masses

Sunday: Palm Sunday (10th April)

10am John & Mary Elias

12pm Jonathan Stevens (Anniversary)

6pm Lena Buttle (Anniversary)

Monday: Weekday in Lent (11th April)

9.30am Mrs Grace Denner RIP

Tuesday: Weekday in Lent (12th April)

9.30am Spiro Abela RIP

Wednesday: Weekday in Lent (13th April)

9.30am Deceased members of the Jones Family

Thursday: Holy Thursday (14th April)

7.00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Intentions of the Holy Father

Friday: Good Friday (15th April)

12.00pm Stations of the Cross

3.00pm Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

Saturday: Holy Saturday (16th April)

8.30pm Easter Vigil

For all who are Celebrating Baptism and those

being Received into Full Communion

Sunday: Easter Sunday (17th April)

10am People of the Parishes

12pm Intentions of the Archbishop

6pm For the Faithful Departed

Confessions will be celebrated in children's liturgy room on Saturday from 10am to 11am. Access via the Church.

PRAYER FOR UKRAINE

Mary, Our Lady of Kyiv, Mother of God, we ask you to intercede for the people of Ukraine, for their government, and for all who suffer as a result of war. Stand with them now just as you stood beside your Son as he suffered on the Cross at Calvary. Give the people of Ukraine strength and courage through faith, hope and justice. May we, in our turn, support them through prayer and generosity that human lives may be saved, that the injured may be healed, that the dead may rest in peace, that there will be abiding peace after war. Amen.

Our **Lenten Alms** will this year be donated to the people of Ukraine in the midst of the crisis afflicting their country. Our donations will be channelled through the global Catholic Caritas Network.

N.B. THIS WEEKEND WILL BE OUR LAST OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS FUND.

ON-GOING TOTAL: £ 2152.28

My sincere thanks for the magnitude of your continuing generosity.

PALM SUNDAY (ST MARY OF THE ANGELS)

Before the 10am Mass on Palm Sunday, members of the congregation are asked to assemble in the patio area accessed through the gate (normally locked) on Kings Rd. We will then process into the church.



PALM SUNDAY (HOLY FAMILY)

Before the 11am Mass on Palm Sunday, members of the congregation are asked to assemble in the car park near the entrance to the hall.

BOTH DRIVERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION ARE REMINDED TO TAKE EXTREME CARE.

CANDIDATES FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION AT THE EASTER VIGIL

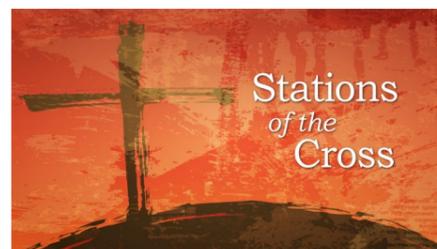
Please pray for Daniel, Alicia, Ava, Esmee, Harley, Josie-Mae, Victorine and Incarnato who are to be baptised at the Easter Vigil.

Please pray for David, Fortunato and Luke who will complete their Christian Initiation and be brought into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS DURING LENT

*** St Mary of the Angels.
Friday 15th April at 12.00pm.

*** Holy Family.
Friday 15th April at 12.00pm.



LENTEN PENITENTIAL SERVICE

Thanks to the Music Group for supporting the Penitential Service and to all who attended.

ANNUAL COMMITMENT - SPECIAL MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AND READERS

At the Mass of the Lord's Supper in both parishes, Special Ministers of Holy Communion and Readers will be asked to renew their ministerial commitment to the parish. I understand that not everyone will be able to attend. Those Ministers who are not present I encourage to undertake a personal act of recommitment at some time during the Sacred Triduum.

SICK AND HOUSEBOUND

As we prepare for Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum, we are most conscious of our housebound parishioners. I address them all personally: "I hope that many of you will be able to connect to the Sacred Liturgy through our livestreaming service over the coming week. Be assured of our prayers over the coming days. Let us accompany Christ along the road that leads to Calvary and then let us await His glorious resurrection. May God's blessing rest upon each and every one of you at home." I am very conscious that a number of parishioners have recently contracted Covid infections and a few others have suffered injury as a result of accidents. Get well soon, one and all.

PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED DURING HOLY WEEK

I am requesting the assistance of volunteers in both parishes who are willing and able to take photographs of the various liturgies that are to be celebrated from Palm Sunday through to Easter Sunday. It is my intention to update the parish website with more contemporary photographs. If you are able to assist please contact me asap regarding your availability.



CHRISM MASS

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Metropolitan Cathedral on Tuesday 12th April at 11.30am – please note the change of day from Wednesday.

S.V.P. AT HOLY FAMILY PARISH

In company with the current membership, I recently met with the regional recruitment officer of the Society of St Vincent de Paul with a view to her delivering an address to the parish. It was agreed at the meeting that this address would be delivered on the weekend of 23rd/24th April, the week after Easter. The current membership involves six ladies who have served for many decades and who now feel it is the right time to hand on the baton. The S.V.P. is a magnificent organization that continues to serve the Church in so many ways. Its members provide the hearts and hands that offer an outreach to so many vulnerable people, providing a wide spectrum of spiritual and practical advice and support. During our recent meeting I asked each of the current members to submit a short account of their long service. I am most grateful to have received their responses and these will be placed in the parish archives. On behalf of the parish community, I wish to express the deepest appreciation for the work undertaken by Eileen, Bella, Bernadette, Helen, Theresa and Una. Each one of them has channelled many graces and blessings to so many over the years. May God's blessing come down and rest upon each one of these generous servants of charity. I hope that a new cohort of members will soon step forward. St Vincent de Paul – Pray for us.

TWO OF THREE MONSTRANCES RETURNED

As previously announced, I sent the three monstrances from St Mary of the Angels for renovation to a craftsman in the jewellery quarter of Birmingham. Two of the three were returned a few days ago. Both have been beautifully restored and I will have them on display on Easter Sunday for people to examine. The largest monstrance is nearly complete and will return soon after Easter. The total cost of these renovations amounts to £3,000. To put the cost in context, the largest monstrance has been given a significant value, which I will not specify for obvious reasons. Any contributions towards the cost will be gratefully accepted.

THANKSGIVING MASS FOR MARRIAGE

The annual Thanksgiving Mass for Marriage will be celebrated in St David's Cathedral at 12 noon on Saturday 14th May. Couples who wish to be included in the Mass Booklet should email flc@rcadc.org by 18th April. Married couples will be invited to make the Renewal of Commitment during the Mass.

BELMONT ABBEY HEREFORD

The Annual Torchlight Procession in hour of Our Lady will take place at 9pm on Wednesday 11th May. All are welcome.

FINANCE & PROPERTY

Parish Offertory Collection at St Mary's:

3rd April - Gift Aid £241.21 Loose £716.51

Lenten Alms for Ukraine current total £1709.84

St Mary's Standing Orders per week amount to £600.00 of which 90% is gift aided.

Parish Offertory Collection at Holy Family:

3rd April - Gift Aid £215.00 Loose £274.66

Lenten Alms for Ukraine currently total £442.44

Holy Family Standing Orders per week amount to £250.00 of which 95% is gift aided.

*****EASTER OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR THE CLERGY ARE AVAILABLE TO COLLECT AT BOTH CHURCHES*****

GIFT-AID ENVELOPES FOR THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR

The Gift Aid Envelopes for the new financial year are now available for collection at both churches. I am grateful to Philip and Tony for preparing the envelopes for distribution.

N.B. A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE MOVED FROM THE ENVELOPE SCHEME TO STANDING ORDER CONTRIBUTIONS. AS A RESULT, MOST PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED A NEW NUMBER IN THE SYSTEM. PLEASE NOTE YOUR NAME RATHER THAN PRESUME ON YOUR PREVIOUS NUMBER.

THE GRAND NATIONAL

If any parishioner placed a bet on the winner of the Grand National I hope that they will contribute at least 10% of their betting gains to parish funds!!!

ST MARY'S PIETY STALL

Please call into the Piety Stall, there is new stock for Easter, Confirmation and First Holy Communion as well as for the forthcoming Ordination we will be celebrating.

MISSIO RED BOXES AND MAGAZINES

The Red Boxes which were brought to The Priory last year are now ready for collection. The quarterly 'Mission Today' magazines are also available for collection. If you have a Red Box that requires emptying then please bring it to the Sacristy when you next attend Mass.

N.B. A NEW PARISH REPRESENTATIVE FOR MISSIO IS NEEDED FOR ST MARY OF THE ANGELS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH THE IMPORTANT WORK OF OUR INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC EVANGELISATION AGENCY THEN PLEASE CONTACT CANON COLLINS.

MARY IMMACULATE NEWSLETTER

There are a few copies of the school newsletter available at the back of St Mary's.

HOLY FAMILY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Beechley Drive, Fairwater, Cardiff, CF5 3SN

Tel: 02920 565354

Headteacher: Mrs Louise Mills

Website: <https://www.holyfamilyprm.co.uk>

PERMANENT DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

Post Ref: ED50051134

L06 – L10

£48,571 - £53,646

Required from September 2022

ISR 6-10

Due to the retirement of the current Deputy Headteacher the Governing Body of Holy Family RC Primary School are seeking to appoint a Deputy Headteacher who is an excellent classroom teacher with high expectations of all; and will strengthen our ambitious and hardworking leadership team.

Holy Family is a welcoming and very caring school with a strong Catholic ethos based on Gospel Values with Christ at its centre. Our staff and Governing Body work alongside parents to foster in our children a love of learning and to deepen their understanding of their faith through Religious Education, Class and School worship and celebration of the Mass. As a Catholic Family the wellbeing of all our learners is at the heart of our curriculum. Our aim is to equip our children to be lifelong learners, and ensure all pupils reach their full potential.

Holy Family is a place where children are developed through our great outdoors and stimulating indoor learning environment. Throughout the school, hard-working and talented practitioners provide engaging and meaningful learning experiences and staff members have the highest expectations of themselves and of each child from Reception to Year 6.

Please look at the Newsletter section of our website for a greater insight to life at Holy Family <https://www.holyfamilyprm.co.uk>

If you have the vision, drive and energy to support, challenge and inspire our staff members to achieve excellence on a daily basis and help our children to learn and prepare for the exciting New Curriculum for Wales, then this could be the job for you. Applications are welcomed from experienced Catholic professionals who are seeking a new challenge in a vibrant growing school. Visits to the school are warmly welcomed. Please contact the Headteacher to make an appointment.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check. This vacancy is suitable for post share. Please download or print off the application form by selecting the "Apply Now" button. Completed application forms should be returned via post or email to: Mrs Louise Mills Headteacher lomills@cardiff.gov.uk The closing date for applications is Thursday 28th April 2022

Applicants must use the current CES application forms (December 2020). The successful candidate will be expected to sign the Catholic Education Service Contract of Employment.

Closing date: Thursday 28th April 2022.

Shortlisting: Tuesday 3rd May 2022

Observed Teaching: Thursday 5th May 2022

Interviews: Thursday 12th May 2022

Safeguarding and Child Protection are key priorities for the Council. We aim to support children and vulnerable adults to ensure they are as safe as they can possibly be. Our services and schools are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults, and will take action to safeguard their well-being, and acknowledge that children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection. This is supported in the general ethos of the Council and all schools.

SOME HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND THAT WILL ENABLE US TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Persian Empire was overthrown by the spectacular conquests of Alexander the Great which he orchestrated between 336 BC and 323 BC. Alexander aimed to unite 'Greek' culture with the East. Greek influence became embedded across the shores of the eastern Mediterranean and then further East through to present day Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and India. After Alexander's untimely death his vast dominions were divided. His general Ptolemy took Egypt and also established control over Palestine.

What we identify as Israel has a geography that has always held strategic importance as a crossroads. Ptolemy and his successors understood this but nonetheless delegated a significant amount of autonomy in religious affairs to the Hebrews. Many Jews migrated to Alexandria, Ptolemy's new capital in Egypt. This historical period is often called the Hellenistic Age (Hellen = Greek). The koine (common) dialect of the Greek language became the international language. The Jews of the diaspora (dispersion/expatriate) adopted this language as their own. The Jewish community of the Alexandria at this time translated the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) into Greek – called the Septuagint and completed by the middle of the second century BC. A group known as the Hasidim (Pious Ones) resisted the Hellenizing influence.

The Pharisees would become a school of thought which later resisted Greek influence on Jewish thought and religious practice, determining that external influences diminished true devotion and adherence to the Law. When the power of the 'Ptolemies' of Egypt declined, Palestine finally fell to Antiochus III ('the Great') in 200 BC. Antiochus belonged to the Seleucid dynasty which had been established in Syria by another of Alexander's generals. The Seleucids initially treated Jewish institutions with respect. Antiochus made a fatal strategic error when his political ambitions led him to attempt the capture of western Asia Minor (Turkey) and Greece itself. This move provoked a clash with the rising power of Rome. Antiochus was decisively beaten in 190 BC at Magnesia in western Asia Minor. Antiochus was forced to surrender and to pay punitive reparations and thus Rome became a dominant force in the East. Antiochus IV Epiphanes who ruled in Syria from 175 BC to 164 BC tried to restore the fortunes of the kingdom he had inherited. He fostered division among the Jewish factions and profited from many intrigues. He increasingly inflicted Greek culture on the Jews, eventually desecrating the Temple of Jerusalem by placing a pagan altar within its precincts. This act provoked a violent Jewish response. A patriotic leader emerged, the priest Mattathias, who had five sons. The family are collectively known as the Maccabees, a name taken from the third son who was called Judas Maccabaeus. It was this son who assumed leadership of the rebellion following the death of his father.

The Maccabean struggle for freedom eventually gained a virtual independence for the Jewish nation. This semi-autonomous state was ruled by a succession of high-priests of the Maccabean family. These rulers are known by the dynastic name of Hasmoneans. These Hasmonean rulers eventually assumed the title of kings. They cultivated good relations with Rome and they even expanded their sphere of control by conquering Samaria and Galilee. Hasmonean rule lasted until 63 BC. In that year Pompey, the Roman commander in the East, intervened when a dynastic dispute erupted among the Hasmoneans. Pompey took the opportunity to occupy Jerusalem and promptly absorbed Palestine into the Roman Province of Syria, which had itself only recently been created and organized from the remnants of Seleucid dominions.

The Roman state was itself suffering from internal divisions. It had become evident that its municipal institutions were unequal to the task of governing an ever-expanding empire. A series of Roman civil wars had enormous repercussions throughout the East. Julius Caesar defeated Pompey and became 'Dictator' until he himself was murdered by republicans in 44 BC. Following Caesar's death his political faction, led by Mark Anthony and Octavian, confronted the republicans under Brutus and Cassius. The republicans were finally defeated in battle at Philippi in Macedonia in 42 BC. Mark Anthony and Octavian in their turn then fought for supremacy. Octavian won a decisive victory at Actium in Greece in 31 BC. Octavian was still a young man, the great-nephew of Julius Caesar. In 27 BC the Roman Senate conferred upon Octavian the title 'Augustus'. Octavian Augustus was careful to conceal/disguise the full extent of his power. He was always careful to shroud his accumulation of authority under a shroud of apparent legality. He claimed to be restoring the Republic but was in fact establishing what would properly be termed the Empire. Hereditary monarchy had previously been considered abhorrent by the Romans. Octavian Augustus established a secure peace combined with increased prosperity, at least for the ruling class. He died in 14 AD.

For scriptural reference, Jesus was born in the time of Augustus (Luke names the Emperor). The public ministry of Jesus took place during the reign of Tiberius (14 AD – 37 AD), who had succeeded Augustus. Paul's journeys took place during the reigns of Claudius (41 AD – 54 AD) and Nero (54 AD – 68 AD).

THE HERODIAN DYNASTY

When the Romans organised the East in 63 BC, Pompey appointed a priest named Hyrcanus to rule Galilee, Samaria, Judea and Peraea. Hyrcanus had an astute Vizier, an Idumeean named Antipater, who knew how to use his power shrewdly for the benefit of his own family. Antipater secured key governorships for two of his sons, Phasael and Herod. When Antipater was murdered in 43 BC, these two young men succeeded jointly to the position of Vizier in the court of Hyrcanus. Phasael was soon the victim of a Parthian raid which followed the assassination of Julius Caesar, who had intended pacifying their frontier. Herod escaped to Rome.

Whilst in Rome, Herod so impressed Octavian (the future Augustus) that he received a mandate to recover Palestine. This he did between 39 BC and 36 BC. Herod (who became known as Herod the Great) established a pro-Roman administration for thirty-four years. It was under Herod the Great's direction that the Roman port and administrative base at Caesarea was established (i.e. Caesaria Maritima on the Mediterranean coast, not Caesaria Philippi north of the Sea of Galilee). Herod the Great also built a significant temple in honour of Augustus in the city of Samaria.

Herod the Great was hated by the Jews he ruled, for his bloodline was Edomite – Edom, a land to the east of the river Jordan, had been settled by the Hebrew but this Jewish lineage saw a diminishing religious allegiance over the generations. To conciliate, Herod the Great decided to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem on a scale even greater than that of Solomon's original. Herod the Great was an accomplished politician and diplomat. He successfully divided opposition movements by suppressing the old Jewish aristocracy. Herod was astute enough to take Mariamne as his wife for she was a member of said aristocracy. Herod also erected a system that designated nobility to his officials. He even established his own political party, the Herodians (spoken of in the Gospels). He also established an efficient bureaucracy which was modelled on that created by the Greek Ptolemies in Egypt. He employed a mercenary army and secured his power by building a sequence of military strongholds, including the famous Masada.

There was a heavy price to pay for the manner in which Herod the Great conducted his affairs. His family was torn by in-fighting leading to murders and led him becoming prey to paranoia. The gospels relate Herod the Great's concern at the birth of Jesus, the presumed threat posed by a Messianic King. The murder of the Holy Innocents at Bethlehem followed.

When Herod the Great died his will outlined how the kingdom was to be divided between his three legitimate sons. His son Archelaus, born to the Samaritan woman Malthace, was given control of Judea and Idumaea, by far the choicest part of the inheritance. Herod Antipas, one of the same Malthace, received Galilee and Peraea. Philip, born to a Jewess named Cleopatra, received Ituraea, Tracoonitis and the associated territories in the north-east. Archelaus inherited all his father's vices but without any of his political ability. Archelaus' misrule led to a rebellion in Jerusalem which was bloodily suppressed. A wider uprising ensued which required the strong intervention of Varus, the then Roman Governor of Syria. Archelaus only ruled until 6 AD, when Jewish protests secured his banishment. Judea was then placed under the control of a Roman Procurator.

Herod Antipater (better known to us as Antipas) proved to be a more successful ruler. Antipas displayed a truly Herodian flair for politics and diplomacy which led to him ruling for as long a period as did his father. Whilst he flourished during the reign of Emperor Tiberius, Herod Antipas seriously misread the warped mind of Caligula. He had sought a royal title from Caligula but was instead deposed and exiled, a fate shared by his wife Herodias. Antipas, with Herodias, was ruling during the public ministry of Jesus (see the condemnation of John the Baptist and of Jesus himself).

Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, was brought up in Rome. He managed Emperor Caligula better than Antipas. Agrippa I succeeded to Philip's position. When Antipas was exiled, Agrippa I received charge of Galilee and Peraea. In 41 AD, Agrippa was granted charge of the entirety of his grandfather's domains by the then Emperor Claudius. It is Agrippa I who is mentioned in Acts 12. His reign did not last long for he died in 44 AD at the age of just thirty-four.

It was at this stage that the whole of Palestine came under direct Roman rule. Agrippa I had left behind a teenage son who was appointed by Claudius as the king of Chalcis in 48 AD. In 53 AD, the domains of Philip the Tetrarch and Lysanias were added to Chalcis. It was only at this point that the formal title of king was actually bestowed by Claudius on the one who became Agrippa II, the last of the Herodian line. It is Agrippa II who appears in Acts 25 as a guest of the Procurator Festus who is hearing Paul's defence against the accusations of the Jews.