**Friday 5 February 2021**

*Liturgical Colour: Red.*

**Readings at Mass**

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**Entrance Antiphon**

Behold, now she follows the Lamb who was crucified for us,

powerful in virginity, modesty her offering,

a sacrifice on the altar of chastity.

**Or:**

Blessed is the virgin

who by denying herself and taking up her cross

imitated the Lord, the spouse of virgins

and prince of martyrs.

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**Collect**

May the Virgin Martyr Saint Agatha

implore your compassion for us, O Lord, we pray,

for she found favour with you

by the courage of her martyrdom

and the merit of her chastity.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever.

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**Readings for the feria (Friday)**

There is a choice today between the readings for the ferial day (Friday) and those for the memorial. The ferial readings are recommended unless pastoral reasons suggest otherwise.

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**First reading**

**Hebrews 13:1-8**

**Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and will be for ever**

Continue to love each other like brothers, and remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Keep in mind those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; and those who are being badly treated, since you too are in the one body. Marriage is to be honoured by all, and marriages are to be kept undefiled, because fornicators and adulterers will come under God’s judgement. Put greed out of your lives and be content with whatever you have; God himself has said: *I will not fail you or desert you,* and so we can say with confidence: *With the Lord to help me, I fear nothing: what can man do to me?*

Remember your leaders, who preached the word of God to you, and as you reflect on the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be for ever.

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**Responsorial Psalm**

**Psalm 26(27):1,3,5,8-9**

*The Lord is my light and my help.*

The Lord is my light and my help;

whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;

before whom shall I shrink?

*The Lord is my light and my help.*

Though an army encamp against me

my heart would not fear.

Though war break out against me

even then would I trust.

*The Lord is my light and my help.*

For there he keeps me safe in his tent

in the day of evil.

He hides me in the shelter of his tent,

on a rock he sets me safe.

*The Lord is my light and my help.*

It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;

hide not your face.

Dismiss not your servant in anger;

you have been my help.

*The Lord is my light and my help.*

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**Gospel Acclamation**

**cf.Lk8:15**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are those who,

with a noble and generous heart,

take the word of God to themselves

and yield a harvest through their perseverance.

Alleluia!

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**Gospel**

**Mark 6:14-29**

**The beheading of John the Baptist**

King Herod had heard about Jesus, since by now his name was well known. Some were saying, ‘John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.’ Others said, ‘He is Elijah’; others again, ‘He is a prophet, like the prophets we used to have.’ But when Herod heard this he said, ‘It is John whose head I cut off; he has risen from the dead.’

Now it was this same Herod who had sent to have John arrested, and had him chained up in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife whom he had married. For John had told Herod, ‘It is against the law for you to have your brother’s wife.’ As for Herodias, she was furious with him and wanted to kill him; but she was not able to, because Herod was afraid of John, knowing him to be a good and holy man, and gave him his protection. When he had heard him speak he was greatly perplexed, and yet he liked to listen to him.

An opportunity came on Herod’s birthday when he gave a banquet for the nobles of his court, for his army officers and for the leading figures in Galilee. When the daughter of this same Herodias came in and danced, she delighted Herod and his guests; so the king said to the girl, ‘Ask me anything you like and I will give it you.’ And he swore her an oath, ‘I will give you anything you ask, even half my kingdom.’ She went out and said to her mother, ‘What shall I ask for?’ She replied, ‘The head of John the Baptist.’ The girl hurried straight back to the king and made her request, ‘I want you to give me John the Baptist’s head, here and now, on a dish.’ The king was deeply distressed but, thinking of the oaths he had sworn and of his guests, he was reluctant to break his word to her. So the king at once sent one of the bodyguard with orders to bring John’s head. The man went off and beheaded him in prison; then he brought the head on a dish and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When John’s disciples heard about this, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

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**Prayer over the Offerings**

May the offerings we bring in celebration of blessed **N.**

win your gracious acceptance, O Lord, we pray,

just as the struggle of her suffering and passion

was pleasing to you.

Through Christ our Lord.

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**Communion Antiphon**

**Rv 7: 17**

The Lamb who is at the centre of the throne

will lead them to the springs of the waters of life.

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**Prayer after Communion**

O God, who bestowed on blessed **N.** a crown among the Saints

for her twofold triumph of virginity and martyrdom,

grant, we pray, through the power of this Sacrament,

that, bravely overcoming every evil,

we may attain the glory of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

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