

### Psalm 27

The first part of this psalm, verses 1 to 6, is a powerful song which expresses unshakeable trust in God. The second part, verses 7 to 14, represents the prayer of a man who is in need of help in his great distress. It is known as a lament. At the heart of this psalm lies a vital message for us in this season of Lent and beyond. The author knows from his own personal experience the weakness of human nature, which is in continual danger of relapsing into wrongdoing, and is unable by its own strength to find the way which leads to a righteous life. He knows his vulnerability. He means business in the act of repentance and is determined to mend his ways. He asks God to teach him the way he should go and to lead him in what is right. It is because he is single minded in putting his relationship with God in order and because he knows that God is gracious but makes demands upon men, that he is free to ask God for protection against the violence and lies of his oppressors. Faith works from within towards that which is without and not the other way round. Only those who have surrendered their hearts to the will of God in humility and are ready to act according to that will avoid the risk of seeking to make God the servant of their own desires in asking for external help. The author has drawn near to God in openhearted prayer, and because of his communion with God, he is delivered from all his afflictions and obtains the fulfilment of his ultimate desires. God has become for him his only support and his only good. Faith is the power which enables the faithful to endure the tension between present afflictions and future deliverance from those afflictions. This is the faith which does not see and yet lives in confident realistic assurance. In prayer and through repentance and faith the writer overcomes his inward and outward afflictions and the way in which he does this gives this psalm a lasting significance. It is an example that should be followed by everyone especially in this season of Lent. This way is one upon which the blessing of God's promise rests.

## Saints & Heroes

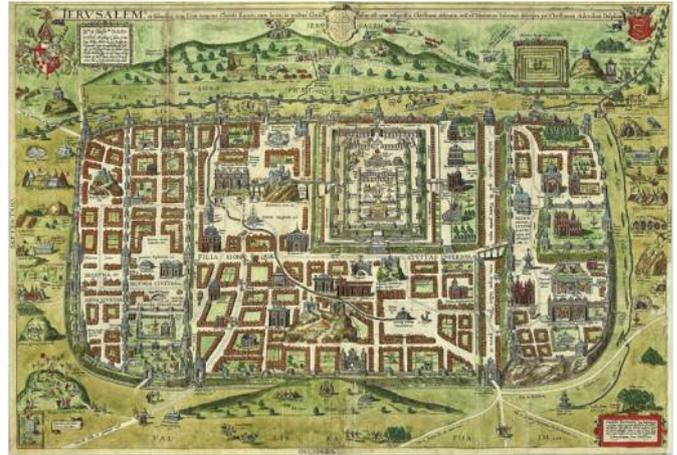
### Withburga

Guinness have enough adverts on 17th March so we can discount St Patrick, especially as his day is on a Sunday. Instead we can concentrate on the amazing journey of Withburga, the virgin daughter of a King of East Anglia. She lived and died as a solitary in Norfolk, and that would have been that if some thoughtless person had not dug her up and found her incorrupt. This made her a useful commodity, so the monks of Ely stole her body and made off with it down river to the sea, hotly pursued by a band of irate Norfolk men, to be buried with her more famous sister, Etheldreda. The pair were joined by another two sisters, Sexburga (honestly) and Ermenilda. Ely then had the full set, while all that was left in Norfolk was a well that had sprung up where Withburga's body had first been exhumed.

17th March  
2019

Second Sunday  
of Lent

## Oh Jerusalem!



Jerusalem is the place to which the Messiah is now heading, and yet he knows that it is the place in which the prophets are killed and stoned. He knows he too will meet his death. In Luke 13, Jesus laments how this city, centre of the Jewish world, the place of God's presence on earth, can do such things, can kill the ones sent to it. But kill them they do. Perhaps the city itself might be an allegory for us: like Jerusalem, we have the choice of whether to accept or reject those God sends us. The question is, will we receive our Messiah with loud 'Hosannas', or will we be one of those who shout 'Crucify him!' Most of us, I suspect, fluctuate between both. Some times we are receptive to the Lord and faithful to him, at other times, we are not. Every sin we commit, however, continues to hurt the Lord, to drive those nails into his hands and into his feet. May we this Lent learn to be like faithful Jerusalem: the place of God's presence, that welcomes its Saviour.

### Prayers to Remember

Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power and idle talk. Give me rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Grant me, my Lord and King, to see my own errors and not to judge my brother, for you are blessed for ever and ever.

Ephrem Syrus