BLACKFRIARS CAMBRIDGE

22 November, 2026

Thirty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Times of the Liturgy

Sunday - 7.45am - Lauds | 8.15am - Low Mass | 9.15am - Dominican Rite Mass (Extraordinary Form) | 11am - Sung Conventual Mass | 6pm - Low Mass | 7pm - Vespers.

Monday - Friday - 7am - Lauds | 7.30am - Conventual Mass | 6.15pm - Devotions and Meditation | 6.30pm - Vespers. [N.B. First Fridays of the month, Vespers in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with a period of Adoration from 6.15pm.]

Saturday - 9am - Lauds | 9.30am - Conventual Mass | 10-11.30am - Confessions| 6.15pm - Sung Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary | 6.30pm - Vespers.

This Week

Sun 22	**Christ the King**
Mon 23	*feria*
Tue 24	S. Ignatius Delgado and Companions
Wed 25	*feria*
Thu 26	*feria*
Fri 27	*feria*
Sat 28	Our Lady on Saturday
Sun 29	**Advent I**

Support Us

Our ministry relies on the generosity of our friends and supporters. If you would like to support us, please make a donation in the cloister, visit our website, or speak to or email the bursar, Fr Albert.

cambridge.bursar@english.op.org

November Dead List

Mass is offered daily for the holy souls. Please use the plain envelopes provided for names and stipends.

Jean Grove Trust Advent Fair - 6 December

This year's Advent Fair to raise funds for the Jean Grove Trust Blackfriars Ethiopia Project will take place on Sunday 6 December, at noon, immediately after 11 am Mass, in the Old Library. Mulled apple and homemade mince pies will be served by the novices. Please do all come. There will be a cake stall as usual, and we are counting on the congregation's generosity to stock it. Please bring your donations of bread, cakes, biscuits, jams and jellies in on the day. Christmas Cards and tea towels will also be for sale, and these are already available down in the cloister, where you can now pay for them using the new bright red Jean Grove Trust card reader.

Safeguarding

Blackfriars Cambridge operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the Safeguarding Policies of the Catholic Church in England and Wales at all times. Our Lay Safeguarding Representative is Emanuela Di Pietro. She can be contacted on 07516 667752 or at <safeguardingrepresentative.cambridge@english.op.org>. The local safeguarding friar is fr Gregory Pearson, OP. He can be contacted on 07724 062971 or at <gregory.pearson@english.op.org>. Alternatively, the Religious Life Safeguarding Service can be contacted on 0151 5562311 or <safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org> if you have any concerns.

The Lash Lecture - 25 November

Professor Fiona Ellis, Professor of Philosophy and Head of Department at the University of Nottingham, will deliver the Lash Lecture, "From Nihilism to God: Challenging a Familiar Story." To register: <https://www.mbit.cam.ac.uk/>

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Annual Gaudete Party - 13 December

On Sunday 13 December, the priory will host its annual Gaudete Party after Vespers. Join us for mince pies, mulled wine and apple juice, and fireworks. The evening ends with Compline.

The Prophets of the Old Testament

x. The prophet Ezekiel. Jerusalem after the fall.

Between 597 BC and 587 BC, Jerusalem and its surrounding countryside remained under the authority of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, but a king appointed by the Babylonians. It is unclear whether many Jews accepted Zedekiah as the true last king. He had been appointed by the Babylonians as what the Romans would have called a client king. It made sense for the Babylonians to keep Jerusalem intact, providing income for the empire. Zedekiah allows Jerusalem to revolt against the Babylonians and pays the price, as does Jerusalem itself and the temple. This is against the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah, and so Zedekiah is defeated and taken into captivity in Babylon, where he dies. Ezekiel does not mention Zedekiah by name, though he seems to refer to him. Instead, Ezekiel refers to Jehoiakin, implying that he was the last king of Judah and, by extension, the last king of Israel. Ezekiel seems to have been taken into exile after the first fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC, and his prophecy begins with a vision while in the east of what had become the Babylonian Empire.

On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), the word of the LORD came to the priest Ezekiel son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was on him there (Ezekiel 1: 2-3).

It is the king Jehoiachin whom Ezekiel seems to regard as the last true king. The reference to Zedekiah is in Chapter 12 in a passage which seems to refer to the final fall of Jerusalem. Zedekiah is referred to as a prince, not a king, and as part of his abject defeat he is blinded and dies in exile, which Ezekiel seems to refer to obliquely in the following passage.

Say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel in it." Say, "I am a sign for you: as I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall go into exile, into captivity." And the prince who is among them shall lift his baggage on his shoulder in the dark and shall go out; he shall dig through the wall and carry it through; he shall cover his face, so that he may not see the land with his eyes. I will spread my net over him, and he shall be caught in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, yet he shall not see it; and he shall die there (Ezekiel 12:10-13).

In the ancient world known to the writers of the Old Testament, we find nations identifying themselves not just with their Gods, but by them. The defeat of a nation was the defeat of its Gods, and sometimes, in the Ancient Near East, the downfall of a dynasty would lead to a change in the Gods regarded as the patrons of the nation. As late as the third century AD, we find this attitude in the martyrdom of St Cyprian. Sentenced to death by the pro-consul, he is accused in these words, 'you have professed yourself an open enemy to the gods and the religion of Rome;"

Given this identification of nation and God, the fall of Jerusalem would seem to mean the fall of their Gods, yet the prophets invert this by showing that far from this being the fall of the God of Israel, the fall of the city is proof of his power. More than that, it means that the power of God extends beyond the world of Israel to the nations themselves. The nations which are specified are the nations known to the people of Israel, but the insight into the greatness of their God applies to all the nations, that is to say, the whole world. This explains why the prophets blame the fall of Israel on the sins of Israel but also attack the Gentiles for their idolatry and their trust in their own power, since their Gods are not the transcendent God of Israel. Pagan gods are interdependent with the nations who worship them, but the God of Israel depends on no one. Yet it is also true that Ezekiel, who is brought out of his exile to witness the sins of the Judaeans in Jerusalem, sees that their sin is greater than that of the nations surrounding them.

'Thus says the Lord GOD: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the centre of the nations, with countries all around her. And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her... (Ezekiel 5:5-6).

All the prophets involved in Israel's fall say this, but Ezekiel goes beyond them. He has mysterious visions of what is revealed to be God, but a God who seems strangely unintelligible. There is no space to describe these, but if we read Chapters 1 and 2, we have Ezekiel's vision of angels and flashing fires, something like amber, and one like a son of man, imagery which occurs later in the Book of the Apocalypse. It is only in Ch 2:4 that we realise that God addresses Ezekiel. God appears in many ways in the Old Testament, but never directly. We see images, but the strangeness of the images in Ezekiel, not to mention the terror that they provoke, shows that we cannot understand God in his own nature. In that sense, not even Ezekiel has seen God, but he is stripped of any comfortable assumption about what God is like. This paves the way for the later visions: the vision of the dry bones that take on flesh and come back to life (Chapter 37), the vision of the temple from which water flows (Chapters 40-42), and the promise that the splendour of God will return to his temple. Israel, what is left of it in Judaea, will come to an end, but there will be a restoration; yet this restoration is not what a crude view of God's power might suggest. There will not be a return to the old kingdom; Jehoiachin is the last of the kings, but there will be a greater kingdom, as Jesus the Christ will put it, a kingdom not of this world (John 18:36). The temple that Ezekiel sees will not necessarily be a physical building, though we know that there will be a new temple rebuilt, but it will be real. Just not real in the way we think of it. The nations too will be brought into some sort of relationship with God. Firstly, they will be judged; Chapters 25 to 32 speak of the judgement of seven nations. Seven seems to be the number of totality in the Old Testament, which is why God creates in seven days, for example; the seven days representing all of

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fr Euan Marley, OP

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Please send any enquiries to prior.cambridge@english.op.org | To request a Mass to be said for a specific intention visit <https://www.blackfriarscambridge.org.uk/mass-service-times/request-a-mass/>