

## Living the Word

### Ezekiel 33.7-9

Ezekiel, the former Temple priest, lived in a challenging time. He was deported in 597BC to Babylon, which is where he had his series of visions. Here Ezekiel experiences the demanding divine request to serve as the watchman or sentinel over the Israelites, which means he has to warn them of impending disaster when they turn away from God. Quite often people don't want to listen to such messages and it is tempting not to want to deliver the warning. But it is made clear that Ezekiel must be willing to condemn all wickedness, so there is a chance for repentance. If people do not repent they will have to live with the consequences and so will those who knowingly stayed silent in the face of wrongdoing. This is a challenging passage for all of us who believe in the way of Christ, since it challenges us to stand up and be counted, even when we fear hostility and being marginalised for doing so.

## Saints and Heroes

### Father Lowder

This week we remember a great hero of Anglo-Catholicism – Father Charles Lowder. After serving in churches in Gloucestershire and Pimlico, he led the mission of St George-in-the East in the London Docks area, and it was to serving the people of London Docks that he was to devote the rest of his life.

He acquired the land to build a new church and in 1866 the church of St Peter was consecrated. The day after the consecration, cholera was discovered in the parish and the tireless work undertaken by Lowder, his fellow clergy and nuns earned him the title 'Father' Lowder – believed to be the first priest of the Church of England to be given that title.

Ill health brought about by overwork led him to have time away from the parish at the end of his life, and his last service at St Peter's was on 1st August 1880. He died on 9th September that year whilst on holiday in Austria. His funeral was attended by several hundred priests and thousands of people – a testimony to his life, work and witness.

### From the Fathers

Before the birth of Mary the world was lost in the darkness of sin. "Mary was born and the dawn arose," says a holy Father. Of Mary it had already been said: Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising? As the earth rejoices when the dawn appears, because it is the precursor of the sun, so also when Mary was born the whole world rejoiced, because she was the precursor of Jesus Christ, the Sun of Justice, who being made her Son, came to save us by His death; hence the Church sings, "Thy nativity, O Virgin Mother of God, announced joy to the whole world; for from thee arose the Sun of Justice, who has given us life eternal." So that when Mary was born, our remedy, our consolation, and our salvation came into the world; for through Mary we received our Saviour.

*St Alphonsus Ligouri on the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8th September)*

6th September  
2020

The Thirteenth  
Sunday after Trinity  
23rd Sunday  
of the Year

## The Power of Two



Jesus never said 'where two or three hundred are gathered together there I am!' A crowd of two is all that is needed to be powerful agents of the Kingdom through prayer. The real hard work, however, is coming to a point where two or three people can agree what to ask and seek for. This is not always a straightforward process. Take, for example, the case where a friend is terminally ill. One person may desire to pray for healing, the other may feel led to pray for the gifts of peace in the last stages of physical life. Which prayer should they make? In the best of circumstances the two friends should seek guidance as to how to pray and what to pray for. All this will bring them closer into communion with the Lord and one another. They come to a point where they pray in a way that they had not previously imagined. The Prayer Book Collect for Trinity 10 can help us with this: 'Let thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants and make them to ask such things as shall please thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

