

When his daughter Tamar is deflowered by her own half-brother, David feebly fails to take action. When his son Absalom rebels against him and is killed in battle, David's grief is so torrential that the whole army slinks home as if defeated.

How can we admire this man? Admittedly he is a charismatic leader, for whose praise men – and women too – would willingly risk their lives. When daredevil young officers break through the enemy lines to fetch him his favourite Bethlehem water, he praises their valour but forbids them ever to do the same again.

## DEVOTION AND REPENTANCE

The point of David is, then, that he is the icon of passionate devotion to the Lord, the icon of repentance and return to the Lord; that is his real importance for us. After David's adultery with Bathsheba the prophet Nathan comes to him with the parable of the poor man's one treasured lamb. David responds unreservedly and prostrates himself in fasting and penance. When the child of that union sickens, David passionately begs forgiveness. When the child dies, his officers fear that David will lose all control, but he obediently accepts the will of the Lord in prayer and offering. Even his weakness towards his own family moves our sympathy, for it is the weakness of passion. When Shimei curses him for his ferocity to Saul's family and clan, he does not defend himself but merely turns to the Lord and accepts the divine judgement: "Perhaps the Lord will look on my wretchedness and repay me with good for his curses today."

## Mass text

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Let us all rejoice in the Lord,  
as we celebrate the feast day in honour of all  
the Saints,  
at whose festival the Angels rejoice  
and praise the Son of God.**

### FIRST READING Apocalypse 7:2-4. 9-14

### PSALM Psalm 23

**RESPONSE Such are the men who seek your face,  
O Lord.**

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,  
the world and all its peoples.  
It is he who set it on the seas;  
on the waters he made it firm. **R.**
2. Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?  
Who shall stand in his holy place?  
The man with clean hands and pure heart,  
who desires not worthless things. **R.**
3. He shall receive blessings from the Lord  
and reward from the God who saves him.  
Such are the men who seek him,  
seek the face of the God of Jacob. **R.**

### SECOND READING 1 John 3:1-3

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!  
Come to me, all you who labour and are  
overburdened,  
and I will give you rest, says the Lord.  
Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL Matthew 5:1-12

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall  
see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they shall be called children of God.  
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the  
sake of righteousness,  
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

### Next Sunday's Readings:

Wisdom 6:12-16  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18  
Matthew 25:1-13

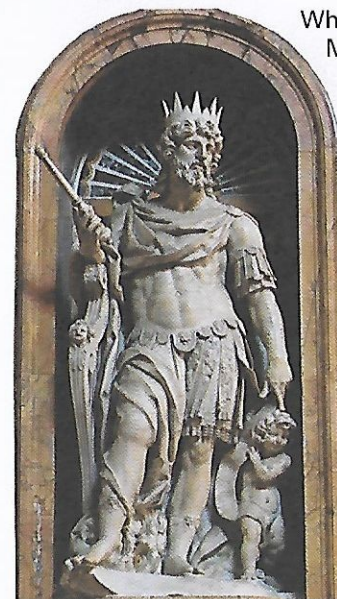


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# SUNDAY BULLETIN



## DAVID



What is so special about David? J.L. McKenzie, author of the famous one-volume *Dictionary of the Bible*, once described David as "an oversexed bandit". The picture of David changes as time goes on. The later books of Chronicles regard David as the founder of the Temple liturgy, and paint a picture of him as a plaster-cast saint. Yes, he was the founder of the liturgy, but only in the sense that he bought the land on which the Temple was to stand. The earlier books of Samuel give a fuller and more realistic picture. David was forbidden to build the Temple because he was a "man of blood". This realistic account is a gem, tracing the personalities of David's family and court, and their intrigues and rivalries. It is the first writing in any literature from

which it is possible to gain a real impression of characters and their flaws, foibles and failings. It must stem from some member of the court of King Solomon.

The David of history is far from perfect. As a kid he boasts of killing lions and bears with his bare hands. When the king's daughter falls wildly in love with him, he takes her on out of sheer ambition; he never had children by her. Challenged by his canny prospective father-in-law to provide a hundred Philistine foreskins as a bride-price, he arrogantly provides two hundred. Expelled from court for usurping the star-struck Jonathan's prerogatives, he sets up a band of roughnecks, offers his services to the Philistine king of Gath, arch-enemy of his own people, and then sets up a protection racket as a sort of robber baron. Granted, he spares Saul when he catches the king in a cave with his trousers down, but he is well aware that he is instilling the lesson not to mess with the Lord's anointed. When his army commander, the brutal Joab, treacherously murders a rival, David ostentatiously wrings his hands in a show of distress, but takes no action against the murderer. Worst of all, when he spots a pretty woman having a bath on her rooftop, he takes her into his bed despite the fact that she is the wife of one of his own serving officers, and then has the officer killed in an attempt to cover his own lust and treachery.

## The God who speaks



Fr Henry Wansbrough OSB considers one of the iconic figures of the Old Testament.

1 NOVEMBER 2020

ALL SAINTS

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DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III