

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

When a profound silence covered all things
and night was in the middle of its course,
your all-powerful Word, O Lord, bounded
from heaven's royal throne.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
splendour of faithful souls,
graciously be pleased to fill the world with
your glory,
and show yourself to all peoples by the
radiance of your light.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Ecclesiasticus 24:1-2.8-12

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.
Wisdom speaks her own praises,
in the midst of her people she glories in
herself.
She opens her mouth in the assembly of the
Most High,
she glories in herself in the presence of the
Mighty One.
"Then the creator of all things instructed me,
and he who created me fixed a place for my
tent.
He said, 'Pitch your tent in Jacob,
make Israel your inheritance.'
From eternity, in the beginning, he created
me,
and for eternity I shall remain.
I ministered before him in the holy
tabernacle,
and thus was I established on Zion.
In the beloved city he has given me rest,
and in Jerusalem I wield my authority.
I have taken root in a privileged people,
in the Lord's property, in his inheritance."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 147

Response:

The Word was made flesh,
and lived among us.

or
Alleluia!

- O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Zion, praise your God!
He has strengthened the bars of your
gates,
he has blessed the children within you (R.)
- He established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.
He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command. (R.)
- He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.
He has not dealt thus with other nations;
he has not taught them his decrees. (R.)

SECOND READING Ephesians 1:3-6.15-18

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Ephesians.

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who has blessed us with all the
spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before
the world was made, he chose us, chose us
in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live
through love in his presence, determining
that we should become his adopted sons,
through Jesus Christ, for his own kind
purposes, to make us praise the glory of his
grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved.

That will explain why I, having once heard
about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the
love that you show towards all the saints,
have never failed to remember you in my
prayers and to thank God for you. May the
God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father
of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and
perception of what is revealed, to bring you
to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten
the eyes of your mind so that you can see
what hope his call holds for you, what rich
glories he has promised the saints will
inherit.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glory be to you, O Christ, proclaimed to the
pagans;
glory be to you, O Christ, believed in by the
world.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 1:1-5.9-14

The longer form may be read: John 1:1-18
A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.
In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.
The Word was the true light
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world
that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh
or will of man
but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the
Father,
full of grace and truth.
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings we make
on the Nativity of your Only Begotten Son,
for by it you show us the way of truth
and promise the life of the heavenly Kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

To all who would accept him,
he gave the power to become children of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, we humbly ask you,
that, through the working of this mystery,
our offences may be cleansed
and our just desires fulfilled.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

3 JANUARY 2021

Sunday Message

2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 2

TO SUM UP...

(JOHN 1:1-18)

**SAY**

The Word became flesh
and pitched his tent
among us.

(see John 1:14)

DO

Look at the words on this sheet: think of
how they are a means of communicating,
just as the spoken word is. Jesus Christ is
God's word to you personally – what is your
response?

LEARN

The opening words of today's
Gospel, "In the beginning", recall the
first words of the book of Genesis.

The masculine term "Word" (*logos*)
refers to the feminine figure Wisdom
(*Hokmah/Sophia*) in the Jewish scriptures.

There is no narrative about the
circumstances of Jesus' conception or
birth in the Gospel according to John:
the Prologue sets out the evangelist's
understanding of who Jesus is.

Our Gospel reading today comes from the Fourth Gospel: that account opens
with an ancient Christian hymn which reflects on who Jesus Christ is, that he
is the supreme means by which God completes the divine self-revealing to
human beings. Like all summaries, it is very dense and only states what the
author believes: the details of how God is revealed will be set out in the Gospel
narrative which follows.

The first words, "In the beginning", echo the opening of the book of Genesis and tell us
that even then, before creation, the Word existed in relationship with God. The central,
pivotal point of the passage declares that "the Word was made flesh": the Prologue, as
this hymn is usually known, presents Jesus Christ as the incarnation, the "en-flesh-ment",
of this pre-existent Word. He is light and life to those who accept him and offers the
possibility of becoming daughters and sons of God to those who decide to put their faith
and trust in his message. But Jesus is not just a messenger: he is the Word. Whatever God
is, the Word is: they are so closely identified that Jesus can say that "to have seen me is to
have seen the Father". The Christmas story is thus given a cosmic sweep in the vision of
the evangelist we call John. ■

REFLECT

On this Sunday, the Gospel invites
us to reflect on the mystery of
the coming of Jesus Christ into
our world. In the Jewish scriptures, God
created by word, by speaking, as in the
first chapter of Genesis. But God also
operated in the world through the female
figure of Wisdom in creating and in
communicating with human beings. The
evangelist refers to this figure by using
the masculine term *logos* (or Word): the
"he" who was with God in the beginning
looks back to the Word and forward to the
person of Jesus.

This deep passage, which we should
read as poetry, expresses an advanced
understanding of the person of Jesus.
It gives the outline of the coming of the
Word into the world and the way in which
people responded. It holds out to us today
the same offer of light, life and becoming
children of God. This is a free gift (grace):
it is not something that we can earn, we
have only to accept it and live by it.

As we approach the end of Christmastide,
we might take time to reflect on the past
few weeks and what the Christmas story

means to us personally. In the thought of
the evangelist John, it is all about God
reaching out to us in God's Word: the
term "word" suggests communicating,
which is what we do when we speak or
write to other people. In Jesus, God is
inviting us into an intimate relationship:
perhaps we might use this reflection
to deepen our relationship with God,
because that is what faith is all about, in
the end. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

After the Lord was baptised, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God, who, when Christ had been baptised in the River Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him, solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be well pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 55:1-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty; though you have no money, come! Buy corn without money, and eat, and, at no cost, wine and milk. Why spend money on what is not bread, your wages on what fails to satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. Pay attention, come to me; listen, and your soul will live. With you I will make an everlasting covenant out of the favours promised to David. See, I have made of you a witness to the peoples, a leader and a master of the nations. See, you will summon a nation you never knew, those unknown will come hurrying to you, for the sake of the Lord your God, of the Holy One of Israel who will glorify you. Seek the Lord while he is still to be found, call to him while he is still near. Let the wicked man abandon his way, the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn back to the Lord who will take pity on him, to our God who is rich in forgiving; for my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.

Yes, the heavens are as high above earth as my ways are above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts.

Yes, as the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Isaiah 12

Response:

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

1. Truly, God is my salvation I trust, I shall not fear.

For the Lord is my strength, my song, he became my saviour.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. (R.)

2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!

Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples! Declare the greatness of his name. (R.)

3. Sing a psalm to the Lord for he has done glorious deeds, make them known to all the earth! People of Zion, sing and shout for joy for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 John 5:1-9

A reading from the first letter of St John.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and whoever loves the Father that begot him loves the child whom he begets. We can be sure that we love God's children if we love God himself and do what he has commanded us; this is what loving God is – keeping his commandments; and his commandments are not difficult, because anyone who has been begotten by God has already overcome the world; this is the victory over the world – our faith.

Who can overcome the world?

Only the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God:

Jesus Christ who came by water and blood, not with water only, but with water and blood;

with the Spirit as another witness – since the Spirit is the truth –

so that there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and all three of them agree.

We accept the testimony of human witnesses, but God's testimony is much greater, and this is God's testimony, given as evidence for his Son.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

John saw Jesus coming towards him, and said:

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 1:7-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said: "Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel

down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (all bow during the next three lines) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the offerings we have brought to honour the revealing of your beloved Son, so that the oblation of your faithful may be transformed into the sacrifice of him who willed in his compassion to wash away the sins of the world. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

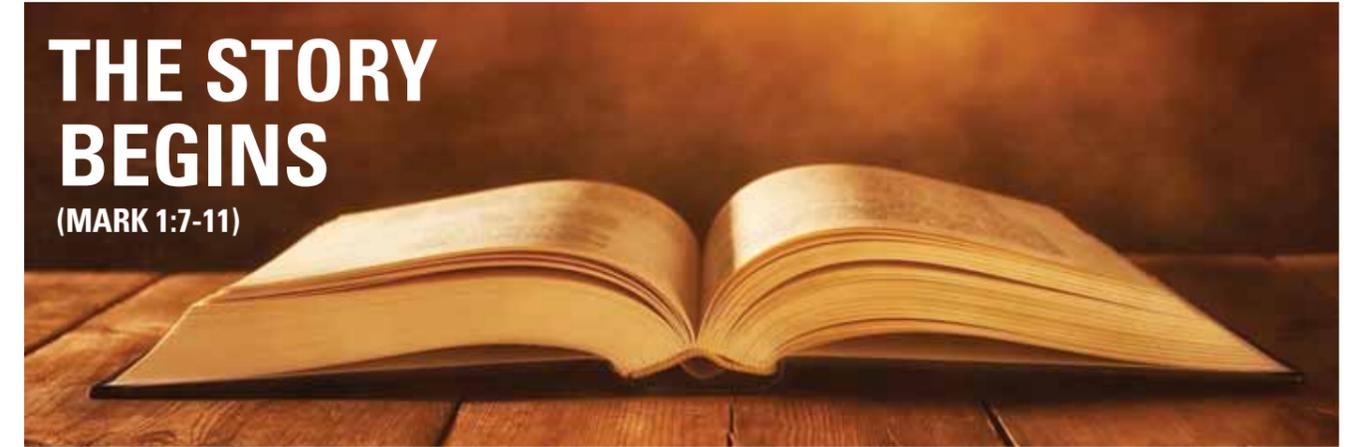
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly entreat your mercy, O Lord, that, faithfully listening to your Only Begotten Son, we may be your children in name and in truth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE WORD

THE STORY BEGINS

(MARK 1:7-11)



Today we begin the course of readings which will cover the Gospel according to Mark during the season known as Ordinary Time.

Each of the evangelists has his own understanding of who Jesus is. Mark makes it clear from the first line of his narrative that Jesus is "the Son of God", and he underlines this in our episode today, in which the divine voice identifies the newly baptised Jesus as "my Son, the Beloved". This declaration comes to Jesus personally: it is not audible to those others who are present. Thus we, the readers or hearers of the Gospel, are let into the secret of who Jesus is, but no one else in the story is privy to this information. None of the characters really understands who Jesus is, until the centurion at the cross proclaims that he was indeed the Son of God.

The baptism of John the Baptist was a sign of people's admission of their sins and their desire to amend their way of life. Jesus is showing solidarity with all those who wish to live a decent life, open to the word of God, and it is by identifying himself with such individuals that God reveals who he is and the Spirit comes upon him. We are invited to accompany Jesus in his ministry in Galilee and on his journey to Jerusalem. Mark's vivid and fast-paced story will challenge us, as well as the persons we encounter on the way, to ask ourselves, "Who is this...?" ■

REFLECT

The four Gospel versions are not meant to be simply biographies of Jesus. They are, rather, statements of the evangelists' different understandings of the person of Jesus: this is one of the reasons why the four narratives are distinct and present apparently inconsistent versions of the same event or saying of Jesus. So, for instance, Mark does not include the instruction from the heavenly voice, which says "Listen to him". The experience here is that of Jesus himself, not of the witnesses round about.

The Gospel of Mark was written before the versions of Matthew and Luke: we may find Mark's presentation more difficult and challenging. We may find ourselves relieved that we are not faced with the same questions that the disciples, for instance, have to confront and how they misunderstand what is happening. As we follow the narrative over the next weeks, Mark is inviting us to put ourselves in the shoes of the people whom Jesus meets and to ask ourselves what we would do in their situation.

The scriptures are the word of God, alive and active and confronting us today. This may sound like something alarming, but we might remember the first line of Mark's Gospel version, that it is "Good News". The fact that we begin with Jesus showing solidarity and identifying himself with those people who are open to the word and willing to examine their lives and amend them where necessary is a sign of hope for us all. Also, we might remember that at our baptism, we received the Holy Spirit, which tells us that we are given the power to live as disciples of Jesus. ■

SAY

Jesus is God's beloved Son.

LEARN

Mark's version of the Gospel is the oldest, written probably about AD 70 in Rome.

The symbolism of the dove in the story is obscure; its meaning is not clear.

Jesus' being baptised is a sign of his solidarity with sinners.

**DO**

Take an afternoon and read through the whole of Mark's Gospel version, preferably at one sitting.



17 JANUARY 2021 Sunday Message 2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B • Psalter Week 2

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

All the earth shall bow down before you,
O God,
and shall sing to you,
and shall sing to your name, O Most High!

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING 1 Samuel 3:3-10. 19

A reading from the first book of Samuel.
Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord
where the ark of God was, when the Lord
called, "Samuel! Samuel!" He answered,
"Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said,
"Here I am, since you called me." Eli said,
"I did not call. Go back and lie down." So
he went and lay down. Once again the Lord
called, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel got up
and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, since
you called me." He replied, "I did not call
you, my son; go back and lie down." Samuel
had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the
word of the Lord had not yet been revealed
to him. Once again the Lord called, the third
time. He got up and went to Eli and said,
"Here I am, since you called me." Eli then
understood that it was the Lord who was
calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, "Go
and lie down, and if someone calls say,
'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening'." So
Samuel went and lay down in his place.
The Lord then came and stood by, calling
as he had done before, "Samuel! Samuel!"
Samuel answered, "Speak, Lord, your
servant is listening."

Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him
and let no word of his fall to the ground.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 39

Response:

Here I am Lord!
I come to do your will.

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry.
He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God. (R.)
2. You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,
but an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.
Instead, here am I. (R.)
3. In the scroll of the book it stands written
that I should do your will.
My God, I delight in your law
in the depth of my heart. (R.)
4. Your justice I have proclaimed
in the great assembly.
My lips I have not sealed;
you know it, O Lord. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 6:13-15. 17-20

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

The body is not meant for fornication; it is for
the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who
raised the Lord from the dead, will by his
power raise us up too.

You know, surely, that your bodies are
members making up the body of Christ;
anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit
with him.

Keep away from fornication. All the other
sins are committed outside the body; but
to fornicate is to sin against your own
body. Your body, you know, is the temple
of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you
received him from God. You are not your own
property; you have been bought and paid for.
That is why you should use your body for the
glory of God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 1:35-42

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

As John stood with two of his disciples,
Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him
and said, "Look, there is the lamb of God."
Hearing this, the two disciples followed
Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them
following and said, "What do you want?"
They answered, "Rabbi," – which means
Teacher – "where do you live?" "Come and
see" he replied; so they went and saw where
he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that
day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of
Jesus after hearing what John had said was
Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early
next morning, Andrew met his brother and
said to him, "We have found the Messiah" –
which means the Christ – and he took Simon

to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said,
"You are Simon son of John; you are to be
called Cephas" – meaning Rock.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that we may participate worthily in these
mysteries,
for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is
celebrated
the work of our redemption is accomplished.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have prepared a table before me,
and how precious is the chalice that
quenches my thirst.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Pour on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love,
and in your kindness
make those you have nourished
by this one heavenly Bread
one in mind and heart.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD

Image in Grace Church, Chiang Mai, Thailand, of John the Baptist talking about Jesus

Today's Gospel reading (this week from the writing of the evangelist John) illustrates the fading of John the Baptist from the story. He had his own disciples, but when Jesus appears, he identifies Jesus to them as "the lamb of God", at which point two of his followers leave him and go to Jesus.

However, they appreciate Jesus simply as a rabbi ("teacher"). They ask where he lives, where his place of instruction is and spend the next few hours with him. One of these is identified as Andrew, who tells his brother Simon that "we have found the Messiah". On one level, this may be true, but in fact he is still speaking according to his own understanding of who the Messiah will be: it is also not quite true that he and his companion actually "found" Jesus – they were pointed in his direction by their previous master, John, and then were invited to spend time with Jesus. In the Fourth Gospel, it is usually Jesus who takes the initiative, and when Simon is presented to him, he tells Simon who he is and who he will be.

This episode shows the beginning of Jesus' forming a circle of disciples. He gives Simon his more familiar name of Cephas (Rock/Peter), which is associated in the Gospel tradition with his position as leader of the disciples: a change of name indicates a change of function or identity. To be a disciple is to answer Jesus' invitation to spend time with him and to learn from him. ■

REFLECT

The old Catechism defined faith as "a response to revelation". In the Bible, people do not find God: God always takes the initiative and communicates with human beings. In the Gospel, Jesus calls disciples and within the larger group he chooses an inner circle, as it were, of twelve apostles. Faith is essentially a positive response to the invitation of Jesus to each one of us. We can learn about the teachings, the dogmas of our faith, but this is not the same as believing.

From the titles the characters in John's Gospel story use for Jesus, we see at what level their appreciation of him really is. Sometimes we see it developing: sometimes a person can meet Jesus, even be healed by him, but not see him as anything more than a human being, albeit with extraordinary powers.

It is easy to identify ourselves or other people as Christian because we or they act in a certain way and hold certain values, but often these apply to anyone

SAY

Jesus, my Lord, my God, my All,
how can I love you as I ought?
(F.W. Faber)

LEARN

In the original Gospel text, the verb "to believe" can also be translated as "to trust".

In the Bible, a change of name signifies a change of function or responsibility.

Jesus as "the Lamb of God" is the one through whom human beings are now reconciled to God.

**DO**

Look at a picture of a person close to you. Think how your friendship and appreciation of that individual has developed over time: take that as the model for your relationship with Jesus.



Sunday Message

24 JANUARY 2021

3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B • Psalter Week 3

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good
pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING *Jonah 3:1-5, 10*

A reading from the prophet Jonah.
The word of the Lord was addressed to
Jonah: "Up!" he said "Go to Nineveh, the
great city, and preach to them as I told you
to." Jonah set out and went to Nineveh in
obedience to the word of the Lord. Now
Nineveh was a city great beyond compare:
it took three days to cross it. Jonah went
on into the city, making a day's journey. He
preached in these words, "Only forty days
more and Nineveh is going to be destroyed."
And the people of Nineveh believed in God;
they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth,
from the greatest to the least.
God saw their efforts to renounce their
evil behaviour. And God relented: he did not
inflict on them the disaster which he had
threatened.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM *Psalms 24*

Response:
Lord, make me know your ways.

- Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. (R.)

- Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord. (R.)

- The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray.
He guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

SECOND READING *1 Corinthians 7:29-31*

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

Brothers, our time is growing short. Those
who have wives should live as though they
had none, and those who mourn should live
as though they had nothing to mourn for;
those who are enjoying life should live as
though there were nothing to laugh about;
those whose life is buying things should live
as though they had nothing of their own;
and those who have to deal with the world
should not become engrossed in it. I say this
because the world as we know it is passing
away.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
The kingdom of God is close at hand;
repent, and believe the Good News.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Mark 1:14-20*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went
into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good
News from God. "The time has come" he
said "and the kingdom of God is close at
hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."
As he was walking along by the Sea
of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother
Andrew casting a net in the lake – for they
were fishermen. And Jesus said to them,
"Follow me and I will make you into fishers
of men." And at once they left their nets and
followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James
son of Zebedee and his brother John; they
too were in their boat, mending their nets.
He called them at once and, leaving their
father Zebedee in the boat with the men he
employed, they went after him.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray,
and in sanctifying them
grant that they may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

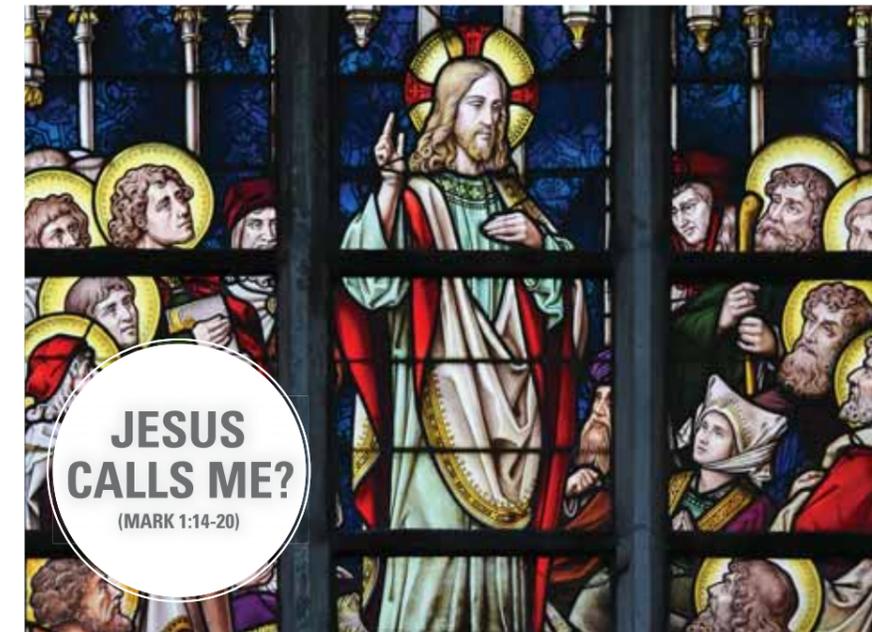
Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, receiving the grace
by which you bring us to new life,
we may always glory in your gift.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Truly a faithful friend is the medicine of life.
Truly a faithful friend is a strong defence.
For what will not a genuine friend perform?
What pleasure will he not afford? What
benefit? What security? Though you should
name infinite treasures, none of them is
comparable to a genuine friend.

St John Chrysostom

THE WORD

Stained glass window in St Gummarus Church in Lier, Belgium

Our Gospel extract today falls into two sections. After the notice about the arrest and imprisonment of John the Baptist, we have an example of a characteristic feature of Mark's account, that of the summary statement.

Here the evangelist records that Jesus preached in Galilee and gives the main underlying theme of the content, namely, the approach of God's kingdom and the need to repent and accept the Good News. Apart from that, we are given no details about how Jesus presented his message.

In the second part, we hear about the call of the first disciples. Jesus is unusual in this, because normally disciples (or students) would, of their own accord, gather round a rabbi so that they could learn from his instruction and way of life. Jesus, on the other hand, takes the initiative and invites people to leave their customary occupations and follow him, both by becoming his disciples and literally going with him, leaving their families and possessions behind. Here, those invited respond immediately to his radical call, just as others will subsequently. ■

REFLECT

There is a hymn which reflects on Jesus' calling of his disciples which begins "Follow me, follow me, leave your home and family" and is often sung with great gusto by Sunday congregations. Whether we would be quite so enthusiastic if we thought that the words actually applied to ourselves is perhaps another matter. We might regard the text as a meditation on the call to the religious life, especially to missionary work overseas. But even those who accept such an invitation soon discover that life is not so simple and that daily needs have to be met, no matter how simply they try to live.

There is always a danger that we can think that certain parts of the teachings of Jesus are for a particular group of other people and therefore do not apply to ourselves. When Mark was writing, there was no priesthood that we would recognise today, no religious orders dedicated to the foreign missions: he is addressing his account of Jesus' call to all his readers. It is true that certain people have a profound conversion experience which leads them to a radical break with their past life: some people may decide to join the Church against the wishes of their family or relations. But the vast majority of us have responsibilities

SAY

Lord, teach me your ways:
Lord, show me your paths.
(Psalm 24:4)

DO

Look round your home and/or workplace: tell yourself that this is the place where Jesus is calling you to live as his disciple.

LEARN

The Sea of Galilee, also known as the Lake of Gennesareth, is an inland freshwater body of water.

It is approximately thirteen miles long and eight miles wide.

Disciples normally chose to follow the rabbi whose teachings and way of life impressed them: Jesus is unusual in selecting his disciples.



View of the Sea of Galilee from the shore

that we cannot just abandon, nor are we being asked to.

But we are all disciples of Jesus. "Repent and believe the Good News" is addressed to us today. This, for most of us, is not something that we do once and for all: it has to be a regular part of our Christian life. The fundamental vocation which we all share is to be a disciple of Jesus and to live as such in whatever way of life we find ourselves. Perhaps "repent" could mean examining ourselves to see if anything is coming between ourselves and Jesus and, if so, doing something about it. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Save us, O Lord our God!
And gather us from the nations,
to give thanks to your holy name,
and make it our glory to praise you.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Grant us, Lord our God,
that we may honour you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 18:15-20

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.
Moses said to the people:
"Your God will raise up for you a prophet like
myself, from among yourselves, from your
own brothers; to him you must listen. This is
what you yourselves asked of the Lord your
God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly.
'Do not let me hear again' you said 'the voice
of the Lord my God, nor look any longer on
this great fire, or I shall die'; and the Lord said
to me, 'All they have spoken is well said. I
will raise up a prophet like yourself for them
from their own brothers; I will put my words
into his mouth and he shall tell them all I
command him. The man who does not listen
to my words that he speaks in my name,
shall be held answerable to me for it. But the
prophet who presumes to say in my name a
thing I have not commanded him to say, or
who speaks in the name of other gods, that
prophet shall die.'"

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 94

Response:
O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord. (R.)

2. Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand. (R.)

3. O that today you would listen to his voice!
"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my
work." (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

I would like to see you free from all worry.
An unmarried man can devote himself to
the Lord's affairs, all he need worry about is
pleasing the Lord; but a married man has to
bother about the world's affairs and devote
himself to pleasing his wife: he is torn two
ways. In the same way an unmarried woman,
like a young girl, can devote herself to the
Lord's affairs; all she need worry about is
being holy in body and spirit. The married
woman, on the other hand, has to worry
about the world's affairs and devote herself to
pleasing her husband. I say this only to help
you, not to put a halter round your necks, but
simply to make sure that everything is as it
should be, and that you give your undivided
attention to the Lord.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 1:21-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

Jesus and his followers went as far as
Capernaum, and as soon as the sabbath
came Jesus went to the synagogue and
began to teach. And his teaching made a
deep impression on them because, unlike the
scribes, he taught them with authority.

In their synagogue just then there was a
man possessed by an unclean spirit, and it
shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus
of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I
know who you are: the Holy One of God." But
Jesus said sharply, "Be quiet! Come out of
him!" And the unclean spirit threw the man
into convulsions and with a loud cry went
out of him. The people were so astonished
that they started asking each other what it
all meant. "Here is a teaching that is new"
they said "and with authority behind it: he
gives orders even to unclean spirits and they
obey him." And his reputation rapidly spread
everywhere, through all the surrounding
Galilean countryside.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord, we bring to your altar
these offerings of our service:
be pleased to receive them, we pray,
and transform them
into the Sacrament of our redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Let your face shine on your servant.
Save me in your merciful love.
O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I
call on you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these redeeming gifts,
we pray, O Lord,
that through this help to eternal salvation
true faith may ever increase.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Do not waste time bothering whether you
"love" your neighbour; act as if you did and
you will presently come to love them.

C.S. Lewis

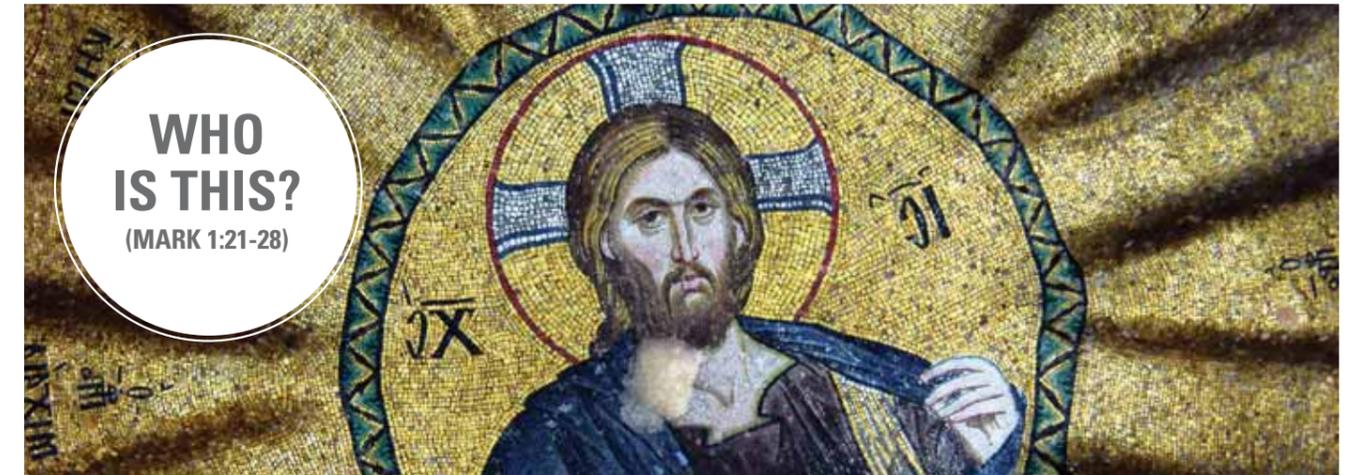
THE WORD

Image of Christ from the cupola of Pammakaristos Church, Istanbul, Turkey

Capernaum is the base for Jesus' ministry in Galilee and the incident in the synagogue there is the first public act of Jesus' ministry after his rather private gathering of companions for his mission.

The story of the exorcism on the sabbath is the first of four such encounters between Jesus and demonic powers. The mention of the "unclean spirit" simply tells us that there was something wrong with the person concerned: it is the opposite of what is (ritually, not morally) holy, that is, reflecting God with whom the fullness of life and being a complete human being is associated. Jesus' acts of power, commonly known as "miracles", are examples of the kingdom of God breaking into situations in human existence where a person is somehow impeded from enjoying full health.

In a way, this incident confirms publicly Jesus' identity as "the Holy One of God", recalling the private announcement to Jesus himself at his baptism. It is a feature of Mark's writing that supernatural forces perceive who Jesus truly is, unlike the human characters in the story. This initial encounter with the forces of evil shows Jesus as the stronger one, who has authority over such hostile beings and can subdue by the power of his word. The people react with astonishment to the successful exorcism and declare that the word of Jesus' teaching is different from that with which they are familiar, namely that of their scribes, as mentioned at the beginning of the passage. The exorcism enhances Jesus' authority as a teacher and Mark also presents Jesus as a mysterious figure who provokes questions about himself, as throughout the Gospel narrative people will ask, "Who is this...?" ■

REFLECT

In Mark's version of the Good News, Jesus is presented as a teacher, but there is little record of what he actually said. Generally, Jesus teaches through his deeds, which is often a more effective way of communicating a message. His acts of power ("miracles") illustrate God's saving action in the human realm.

In Matthew's Gospel account, Jesus describes the gates of hell not being able to prevail against the Church. This description suggests the Church as being on the attack, entering the stronghold of evil and sin. Too often, we think of sin in personal, individual terms, what we ourselves do wrong. In

the Bible, sin is usually something social, something seriously wrong in the way in which human affairs are organised: the existence of poor people is seen by the prophets as an indictment of society, not an unfortunate, inevitable by-product of the economic system.

If we are to continue Jesus' mission today, then the Church has to confront those forces which deprive people of what they need to flourish as human beings. But the Church is not the bishops: the Church is the people of God. As such, the word of God has a message for us today: we are asked to interpret it in terms of our present world – and to act. ■

SAY

Father, may your kingdom come!

(see Matthew 6:10/Luke 11:2)

DO

Consider how you could help the Church's involvement in the social concerns of your local area. Then get involved.

LEARN

Capernaum, a city on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, becomes the base for Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

Jesus' acts of healing and the like are called "acts of power" in the Gospel tradition, rather than "miracles".

The synagogue was a place of prayer and instruction: the Temple was the place of sacrifice.



Roman ruins at Capernaum. Capernaum was a fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.