

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O come, let us worship God
and bow low before the God who made us,
for he is the Lord our God.

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

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing
care,
that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly
grace,
they may be defended always by your
protection.
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

Job 7:1-4. 6-7

A reading from the book of Job.

Job began to speak:

Is not man's life on earth nothing more than
pressed service,
his time no better than hired drudgery?
Like the slave, sighing for the shade,
or the workman with no thought but his
wages,
months of delusion I have assigned to me,
nothing for my own but nights of grief.
Lying in bed I wonder, "When will it be day?"
Risen I think, "How slowly evening comes!"
Restlessly I fret till twilight falls.
Swifter than a weaver's shuttle my days have
passed,
and vanished, leaving no hope behind.
Remember that my life is but a breath,
and that my eyes will never again see joy.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 146

Response:

**Praise the Lord who heals the
broken-hearted.**
or
Alleluia!

1. Praise the Lord for he is good;
sing to our God for he is loving:
to him our praise is due. (R.)

2. The Lord builds up Jerusalem
and brings back Israel's exiles,
he heals the broken-hearted,
he binds up all their wounds.
He fixes the number of the stars:
he calls each one by its name. (R.)
3. Our Lord is great and almighty;
his wisdom can never be measured.
The Lord raises the lowly;
he humbles the wicked to the dust. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 9:16-19. 22-23

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

I do not boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it! If I had chosen this work myself, I might have been paid for it, but as I have not, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands. Do you know what my reward is? It is this: in my preaching, to be able to offer the Good News free, and not insist on the rights which the gospel gives me.

So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost; and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, to have a share in its blessing.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**I am the light of the world, says the Lord,
anyone who follows me
will have the light of life.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Mark 1:29-39

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, and they told him about her straightaway. He went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to wait on them.

That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; he also cast out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.

In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, "Everybody is looking for you." He answered, "Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came." And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

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 our God,
who once established these created things
to sustain us in our frailty,
grant, we pray,
that they may become for us now
the Sacrament of eternal life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Let them thank the Lord for his mercy,
his wonders for the children of men,
for he satisfies the thirsty soul,
and the hungry he fills with good things.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who have willed that we be partakers
in the one Bread and the one Chalice,
grant us, we pray, so to live
that, made one in Christ,
we may joyfully bear fruit
for the salvation of the world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Holiness is not for wimps and the cross is not
negotiable, sweetheart, it's a requirement.

Mother Angelica

7 FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday Message

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**THE WORD**

Year B • Psalter Week 1

BEING HEALED AND SERVING

(MARK 1:29-39)

Mark has established Jesus as the teacher with authority and gives us an example of a typical day's activity, which reflects the Jewish hope that the Messianic age would eliminate both Satan and disease.

Jesus touches Peter's sick mother-in-law and helps her up: physical touching is often a feature in healing stories. This incident takes place immediately after Jesus' encounter with the evil spirit in the possessed man and is the first of eight healing works of Jesus, four of which concern women. Mark then tells us that in the evening, Jesus healed a great number of sick people who had been brought to him. Illness was often associated with demonic possession, and we find that after such healings Jesus often commands silence about what he has done: Mark is careful that his readers should not regard miracles (or "works of power") as proof of Jesus' divine status.

The next day, Jesus goes off early by himself to "a lonely place", literally "a desert place", suggesting a spot where the person could be in close contact with God. Peter and the others track him down and tell him that "everybody is looking for you". Mark often uses what we would probably consider exaggeration to express the universal element of the Gospel. A strong theme in Mark's account is that people of all sorts misunderstand Jesus: this negative note is sounded here and will develop throughout Jesus' ministry. Capernaum serves as the base from which his preaching mission will spread out to embrace the whole of Galilee. ■

REFLECT

One of the unfortunate characteristics of biblical narrative is that so many of the women who feature in the stories remain anonymous. In our Gospel reading today, for example, the four male disciple companions of Jesus are identified by name, but we have no such complementary detail about Peter's mother-in-law. Mark tells us that when she rose from her sickbed, she began "to wait on them": this is the verb usually translated as "to serve", and the only human beings who are mentioned as "serving" in the Gospel tradition are women. Jesus uses the term in his teaching on leadership, that among the disciples the leader is one who "serves", not one who rules or dominates. Another point we might notice is that the verb in question comes from the same root as the noun which gives us the English word "deacon".

We later find that the women are the link witness element in the crucial events of Jesus' death, burial and the events at the tomb of Jesus on Easter morning, after the male disciples had abandoned him in Gethsemane.

In any discussion about the ministry of women in the Church, we might take the New Testament evidence into account, especially Paul's remark that through baptism, there is now "no longer male nor female" in Christ (Gal 3:28). We also should distinguish those customs which belong to historical and cultural systems or prejudice and which have little to do with the revealed word of God. ■



Christ healing Peter's mother-in-law,
mosaic in Cora Church, Istanbul

LEARN

The only other subjects who "serve" in the Gospel story (apart from women) are angels.

Peter, James and John are shown as being Jesus' companions at certain privileged and private occasions, such as the transfiguration and Gethsemane.

Illness in the Bible is seen as belonging to the realm opposed to God: total well-being is expressed by the word *shalom*, usually translated as "peace".

DO

Observe the waiters in a restaurant or café as you sit there or pass by; notice who prepares meals for the others in your home. How does their example reflect the idea of leadership in the Church and your parish?

SAY

**Your leader must be as
one who serves.**
(see Luke 22:26)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Be my protector, O God,
a mighty stronghold to save me.
For you are my rock, my stronghold!
Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your
name.

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

O God, who teach us that you abide
in hearts that are just and true,
grant that we may be so fashioned by your
grace
as to become a dwelling 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 Leviticus 13:1-2. 44-46

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “If a
swelling or scab or shiny spot appears on a
man’s skin, a case of leprosy of the skin is
to be suspected. The man must be taken to
Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests who
are his sons.

“The man is leprous: he is unclean. The
priest must declare him unclean; he is
suffering from leprosy of the head. A man
infected with leprosy must wear his clothing
torn and his hair disordered; he must shield
his upper lip and cry, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ As
long as the disease lasts he must be unclean;
and therefore he must live apart; he must live
outside the camp.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 31

Response:

You are my refuge, O Lord;
You fill me with the joy of salvation.

- Happy the man whose offence is forgiven,
whose sin is remitted.
O happy the man to whom the Lord
imputes no guilt,
in whose spirit is no guile. (R.)

- But now I have acknowledged my sins;
my guilt I did not hide.
I said: “I will confess
my offence to the Lord.”
And you, Lord, have forgiven
the guilt of my sin. (R.)
- Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord,
exult, you just!
O come, ring out your joy,
all you upright of heart. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

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

Whatever you eat, whatever you drink,
whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of
God. Never do anything offensive to anyone
– to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God;
just as I try to be helpful to everyone at all
times, not anxious for my own advantage but
for the advantage of everybody else, so that
they may be saved.
Take me for your model, as I take Christ.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our mind,
so that we can see what hope his call holds
for us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 1:40-45

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his
knees: “If you want to” he said “you can cure
me.” Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched
out his hand and touched him. “Of course
I want to!” he said. “Be cured!” And the
leprosy left him at once and he was cured.
Jesus immediately sent him away and
sternly ordered him, “Mind you say nothing
to anyone, but go and show yourself to the
priest, and make the offering for your healing
prescribed by Moses as evidence of your
recovery.” The man went away, but then
started talking about it freely and telling the
story everywhere, so that Jesus could no
longer go openly into any town, but had to
stay outside in places where nobody lived.
Even so, people from all around would come
to 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

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray,
cleanse and renew us
and may it become for those who do your will
the source of eternal reward.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

They ate and had their fill,
and what they craved the Lord gave them;
they were not disappointed in what they
craved.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having fed upon these heavenly delights,
we pray, O Lord,
that we may always long
for that food by which we truly live.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Do not grieve over temptations you suffer.
When the Lord intends to bestow a particular
virtue on us, He often permits us first to be
tempted by the opposite vice. Therefore, look
upon every temptation as an invitation to
grow in a particular virtue and promise God
that you will be successful, if only you stand
fast.

St Philip Neri

Sunday Message

THE WORD



Fresco in the Baptistry of Parma, Italy of Jesus healing the ten lepers

In the Gospel tradition, there is one example of Jesus healing someone
who is suffering from the condition known as leprosy.

The term covered a wide range of skin complaints from the wasting disease of that name
to the relatively harmless (though unfortunate) condition of eczema. People with that
illness found themselves excluded from normal life in society as others regarded them as
a danger because of the infectious nature of their ailment. Illness was also often regarded
as a punishment for sin, so such individuals were consigned to a kind of “living death”,
and to be cured of leprosy was seen as equivalent to being raised from the dead: it
required God to act.

It is against this background that we might understand the story in today’s Gospel. The
afflicted person’s request is a statement from Mark about Jesus’ identity: the expression
“if you want to” really means “if you have the power”. The human aspect of Jesus is
brought to the fore when he is shown as being deeply moved and physically touching
the infected one in front of him, thus technically contracting the condition of ritual
uncleanness himself. By doing so, Jesus does away with the barrier between what is holy
and what is not. Jesus observes the teaching of the Holiness Code of the book of Leviticus
by telling the cured person to fulfil the prescriptions of the Law. He imposes silence on
him at the same time, an instruction which the man immediately disregards: we will find
this pattern frequently in Mark’s narrative. ■

REFLECT

There are some interesting paradoxes in today’s Gospel episode. Mark implies that
Jesus has divine power in that he can cure the person suffering from leprosy, but
then tells us that Jesus is moved to the depths of his being by feeling compassion
for him. Jesus tells the man to observe the stipulations of the Law of Moses, but he
himself has no compunction in setting aside the strict rules in the same Law about
avoiding contact with a person suffering from leprosy, to the extent of touching him
with his hand. Jesus gives the healed man an instruction not to talk about what has
happened, an order which he cheerfully ignores and so Jesus’ fame rapidly spreads.

We find in this story the tension between the Law and the good of the individual person,
which the evangelists often present through incidents which take place on the sabbath.
Jesus sees the need of the person in front of him and responds to that, rather than
simply imposing the letter of the Law. The purpose of the Law was to help people live
close to God, but it could become a barrier, if people regarded it as an end in itself.

The Gospel presents us with standards which apply to the Church today. If we are overly
concerned with the letter of the Law, we are in danger of forgetting what the Church is all
about, namely to enable Jesus to touch people’s lives. ■

SAY

Lord, we come to you
seeking wholeness.
(Carey Landry)

LEARN

The term “leprosy” covered all sorts of skin
ailments, even less serious, non-infectious
types.

The person suffering from leprosy was
not only physically affected, but socially
excluded from normal contact with others:
they endured a kind of “living death”.

The stories of Jesus healing physical illness
are illustrations of the deeper healing of the
whole person.

DO

There are organisations which help children
who suffer from disfiguring ailments which
prevent them from living a full, social life,
just like the person suffering from leprosy
in our Gospel reading. Consider sending a
donation to support them.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**When he calls on me, I will answer him;
I will deliver him and give him glory,
I will grant him length of days.**

COLLECT

Grant, almighty God,
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.
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

Genesis 9:8-15

A reading from the book of Genesis.

God spoke to Noah and his sons, “See,
I establish my Covenant with you, and
with your descendants after you; also with
every living creature to be found with you,
birds, cattle and every wild beast with
you: everything that came out of the ark,
everything that lives on the earth. I establish
my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall
be swept away again by the waters of the
flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the
earth again.”

God said, “Here is the sign of the Covenant
I make between myself and you and every
living creature with you for all generations:
I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a
sign of the Covenant between me and the
earth. When I gather the clouds over the
earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I
will recall the Covenant between myself and
you and every living creature of every kind.
And so the waters shall never again become
a flood to destroy all things of flesh.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 24

Response:

**Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love
for those who keep your covenant.**

1. 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.)
2. 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.)
3. 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 Peter 3:18-22

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died
once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to
God. In the body he was put to death, in the
spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit,
he went to preach to the spirits in prison.
Now it was long ago, when Noah was still
building that ark which saved only a small
group of eight people “by water”, and when

God was still waiting patiently, that these
spirits refused to believe. That water is a
type of the baptism which saves you now,
and which is not the washing off of physical
dirt but a pledge made to God from a good
conscience, through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is
at God’s right hand, now that he has made
the angels and Dominations and Powers his
subjects.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

**Man does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the
mouth of God.**

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

GOSPEL

Mark 1:12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness
and he remained there for forty days, and
was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild
beasts, and the angels looked after him.

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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray,
to make these offerings,
for with them we celebrate the beginning
of this venerable and sacred time.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes forth from the
mouth of God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed now with heavenly bread,
by which faith is nourished, hope increased,

and charity strengthened,
we pray, O Lord,
that we may learn to hunger for Christ,
the true and living Bread,
and strive to live by every word
which proceeds from your mouth.
Amen.

It is the saying of holy men that, if we wish
to be perfect, we have nothing more to do
than to perform the ordinary duties of the
day well. A short road to perfection – short,
not because easy, but because pertinent
and intelligible. There are no short ways to
perfection, but there are sure ones.

St John Henry Newman

21 FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday Message

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 1

INTO THE DESERT!

(MARK 1:12-15)



SAY

**Lord, make me walk in your
truth, and teach me: for you
are God my saviour.**

(Psalms 24:5)

LEARN

It is better to understand Jesus’ experience
in the desert as his being “tested” rather
than “tempted”.

Fasting is a means of heightening our
spiritual awareness and perception.

It is the Spirit which puts Jesus to the test:
Satan is simply the means by which this is
achieved.

DO

Prepare a container of some sort for the
money you will save from your Lenten
penance. One of the practices of Lent is
almsgiving; what we put aside, we are
supposed to give to charity, which is the
modern form of almsgiving.

**Jesus’ forty-day stay in the desert follows immediately the story of his
baptism; at that event, the Spirit comes upon him and he is revealed as
the Son of God.**

It is this Spirit which drives him, almost violently, out into the wilderness. It is better
that we appreciate this episode as Jesus “being tested”, rather than “being tempted”:
in modern speech temptation is usually associated with sin, or at least with something
wrong or not quite right. It is much more serious than that: it centres on how Jesus
understands what it means to be the Son of God. Before Jesus begins his public ministry,
it is important that he be put to this test. We might note that although Satan is mentioned,
Satan is merely the agent, the means: it is the Spirit who subjects Jesus to the ordeal.

Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark gives us no details about Jesus’ struggle, he simply
reports the fact. Jesus’ fast of forty days recalls those of Moses and Elijah: the mention of
the number forty also evokes the memory of Israel’s experience in the desert during the
Exodus journey, during which the people were tested “to see what was in their heart”.
Wild beasts are often associated in the Bible with powers opposed to God, but there is
also a positive vision of human beings living peacefully with such other creatures. Later in
Mark, the evangelist will present the vision of a new creation.

Once Jesus has passed the test, he is ready to undertake his mission of proclaiming the
kingdom of God and sets off into Galilee. ■

REFLECT

What are you giving up for
Lent? Perhaps someone has
asked you this already. Many
people see Lent as an endurance test: if
they manage to reach Easter with their
resolution intact, they can take some
pride in the fact; if they have broken their
resolution, they can feel downhearted
and defeated – again! But this is to miss
the point: such an attitude is, literally,
self-centred – we are concentrated on
ourselves and our own efforts, whereas

the season of Lent is all about ourselves
and our relationship with God.

One of the purposes of fasting is to make
us more spiritually aware: the less our
body has to do, the more heightened our
spiritual senses can be. If we eat or drink
less and spend more time in quiet prayer,
then all sorts of thoughts will arise in
our mind. The lack of distraction can be
very unsettling: we may be faced with
all sorts of uncomfortable questions that

we would rather not think about. It might
help us to remember that even Jesus had
to struggle with questions about himself
before he could embark on his public
mission as the Son of God empowered
by the Spirit. We are daughters and sons
of God through baptism: this Lent, the
Spirit is asking us to reflect on how we
each understand that truth. Difficult,
perhaps, but worth the effort. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face.
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;
hide not your face from me.**

COLLECT

O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory. 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 Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

A reading from the book of Genesis.

God put Abraham to the test. “Abraham, Abraham” he called. “Here I am” he replied. “Take your son,” God said, “your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you.”

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood. Then he stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven. “Abraham, Abraham” he said. “I am here” he replied. “Do not raise your hand against the boy, the angel said. “Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son.” Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt-offering in place of his son.

The angel of the Lord called Abraham a second time from heaven. “I swear by my own self – it is the Lord who speaks – because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of their enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 115

Response:

**I will walk in the presence of the Lord
in the land of the living.**

1. I trusted, even when I said:
“I am sorely afflicted.”
O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful. **(R.)**

2. Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds.
A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:
I will call on the Lord’s name. **(R.)**

3. My vows to the Lord I will fulfil
before all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem. **(R.)**

SECOND READING Romans 8:31-34

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

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God’s right hand he stands and pleads for us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

From the bright cloud the Father’s voice was heard:

“This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him!”

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

GOSPEL Mark 9:2-10

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said “it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, “This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.” Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what “rising from the dead” could mean.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;**

**he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am
well pleased;
listen to him.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth to be partakers even now of the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

28 FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday Message

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 2



Stained glass in Votivkirche in Vienna, Austria depicting the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor

In the Gospel tradition, the story of the transfiguration of Jesus stands at the beginning of Jesus’ journey to Judaea and Jerusalem, where the events of the paschal mystery will take place.

This incident corresponds to the narrative of Jesus’ baptism, which inaugurates his mission in Galilee. There are several significant details: the high mountain is traditionally a place of revelation and the cloud is a sign of the divine presence; Elijah and Moses represent the Prophets and the Law of Jewish heritage; the heavenly voice speaks to the disciples, whereas the baptism was a personal experience of Jesus himself; Jesus commands the disciples to keep silent about what has transpired, this time, until he is risen.

Mark tells us that Jesus was “transfigured”: his glorified body shines through his garments, rendering them brilliantly white. Thus the three disciples are given a glimpse of Jesus’ true identity. Their reaction is that of someone who has experienced something of the divine: they are awestruck. But glory comes at a price: immediately after the abrupt ending of the episode, a reference to the coming events in Jerusalem appears. The cross makes its presence felt: the title “Son of Man” is usually associated with the suffering Jesus. Jesus had spoken earlier about his future passion and in that context had given his teaching on discipleship. Now he introduces the theme of “rising from the dead”, which Peter, James and John discuss among themselves; but rising from the dead presupposes the passion and death of Jesus which will precede it. ■

SAY

**Speak, Lord, your servant
is listening.**

(1 Samuel 3:9)

DO

Spend some time looking at the crucifix: reflect on how it is the ultimate symbol of Jesus’ giving of himself in service to the Father for our sake.

REFLECT

If you want to watch and properly enjoy a film or the recording of a sports event, there is nothing worse than someone telling you the ending or the final score. Sometimes you will be warned that a “spoiler alert” is coming and that you should turn away now! This incident of the transfiguration – or transformation – of Jesus, which occurs at the mid-point of his ministry, gives us a glimpse of the end of the story. It shows us Jesus Christ in glory, but sets this vision against the background of his passion and death, as he sets out on his journey to Jerusalem and his destiny. At this point, as we have set out on our journey with Jesus through Lent, we are also given an assurance – a sneak preview – that Calvary will not be the end of the story.

The words of the voice from the cloud are addressed to us today, “This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.” Jesus has spoken in the Gospel about the cost of being his disciple and taking up the cross and following him.

Occasionally, we may experience a strong sense of the presence of God in our lives, but this feeling does not usually last very long. Peter’s reaction to the vision of the glorified Jesus is to build tents to prolong the experience, but this is not to be. Peter, like ourselves, has to come down from the mountain, back to normal life. ■

LEARN

The text of the Gospel talks about Jesus being “transfigured” in the presence of his disciples.

Elijah is the figure who represents the prophetic tradition of Israel: Moses personifies the Law, the Torah.

The site of the transfiguration is traditionally located at Mount Tabor, the highest peak in the Holy Land.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

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

O God, who on this day revealed your Only Begotten Son to the nations by the guidance of a star, grant in your mercy that we, who know you already by faith, may be brought to behold the beauty of your sublime glory. 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 60:1-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Arise, shine out Jerusalem, for your light has come,

the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears.

The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round: all are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart throbbing and full; since the riches of the sea will flow to you; the wealth of the nations come to you; camels in throngs will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 71

Response:

**All nations shall fall prostrate before you,
O Lord.**

1. O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgement. **(R.)**
2. In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth's bounds. **(R.)**
3. The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts shall pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts. Before him all kings shall fall prostrate, all nations shall serve him. **(R.)**
4. For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. **(R.)**

SECOND READING Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6

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

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**We saw his star as it rose
and have come to do the Lord homage.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. "Where is the infant king of the Jews?" they asked. "We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. "At Bethlehem in Judaea," they told him "for this is what the prophet wrote:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. "Go and find out all about the child," he said "and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage." Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was.

The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

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

Look with favour, Lord, we pray, on these gifts of your Church, in which are offered now not gold or frankincense or myrrh, but he who by them is proclaimed, sacrificed and received, Jesus Christ. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**We have seen his star in the East,
and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Go before us with heavenly light, O Lord, always and everywhere, that we may perceive with clear sight and revere with true affection the mystery in which you have willed us to participate. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

3 JANUARY 2021

Sunday Message

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 2

WE THREE KINGS?

(MATTHEW 2:1-12)



The community of Matthew the evangelist was made up in great part of Jewish converts to the Gospel preaching.

However, there seem to have been Gentile members as well, so the foreign magi offer a way of including them in the story of the birth of Jesus and its meaning for all people, irrespective of their race or original creed. Not being Jewish, the magi do not have access to the scriptures, but are guided by what we might term natural revelation, represented in our passage today by the star. But this can lead them only so far and not to their final destination: they need to be informed by the word of God as to where their search will be concluded.

The magi are sincere in their declaration that the reason for their journey is to pay homage to the infant King of the Jews. Herod says that he wishes to follow their example, but will reveal his real motive in the episode of the slaughter of the baby boys in Bethlehem. Herod the Great was not truly Jewish and had been appointed by the Romans as ruler. To hear Jesus described as "king of the Jews" would be, to his ears, a threat to his authority and we will hear the title "king of the Jews" in the story of the crucifixion. The chief priests and scribes who furnish Herod with the information about Bethlehem are the religious figures familiar with the Jewish scriptures: they will appear in the story of Jesus' ministry as his opponents. We notice also that the Gentile magi are guided by a dream, just as the Jewish Joseph has been earlier in Matthew's account.

The infancy narrative thus warns us that Jesus will face hostility in his ministry. Herod represents the political forces: the chief priests and scribes stand for the religious Temple authorities. ■

REFLECT

An important theme in the Gospel is that God's message is for all people. We might consider today that Jesus, his family and first disciples were all Jewish. The magi traditionally are presented as coming from Persian lands afar, that is, modern-day Iran, or from Babylon, today's Baghdad in Iraq. It is unfortunate that all too often today, Christianity is seen as a Western, European faith when its roots are in the Middle East.

Traditionally, the Epiphany scene contains an Asian, African and European figure, an artistic detail which captures very well the meaning of the feast. It suggests that people from all races and backgrounds are invited to accept Jesus and his message. It also implies that if God accepts all people, then we must do the same. Perhaps we might examine our own attitude towards people who are somehow different from ourselves. Do we, probably unconsciously, consider ourselves somehow superior to others because of our background? The apostle Paul tells us that, through baptism, there is no longer Jew or Greek... slave or free... male or female. That might be one lesson of the Epiphany. ■

SAY

**God created human beings
in his image: male and
female he created them**

(see Genesis 1:27).

DO

Look at the people around you in the street: reflect that each one bears the image of God, irrespective of their colour, gender or nationality.



LEARN

The word "epiphany" means showing or revealing.

There are three events which we can understand as an epiphany: first, the showing of the child Jesus to the Gentile magi;

Second, Jesus revealed as the Son of God at his baptism;

Third, Jesus lets his glory, his true identity, be seen at the first sign at Cana, the changing of water into wine.