

## The Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 23rd, 2011

### READINGS & PSALM

Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalm 27:1, 4-9

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23

### INTRODUCTIONS

*These may be included in the Parish Magazine, in the weekly service sheet, or by the lector as an introduction to the readings.*

#### **Isaiah 9 : 1-4**

Today's first reading includes words which, centuries later, Matthew took as being fulfilled in Jesus. It is a prophetic announcement of deliverance, greting the one who will establish a new kingdom – the enduring rule of God.

#### **1 Corinthians 1 : 10-18**

We continue from last week the opening section of this letter. Paul has expressed his joy in their faith and confidence in their spiritual strength, yet quickly moves to deal with their internal disputes. They are to stop creating factions under different leaders; there is only one Gospel of Christ.

#### **Matthew 4 : 12 - 23**

Jesus's public ministry began in and around Capernaum, on the shore of Lake Galilee. According to Matthew, this made true the prophecy of Isaiah. Jesus calls men from their daily work to share his mission work.

### PRAYERS

Lord God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: mercifully accept our prayers, and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do nothing good without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** *BCP. Trinity 1*

Let us pray [for unity and peace.]

All powerful and ever-living God, help us to respond to your love that is within us, that what we do in the name of your Son may lead mankind to unity and peace. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** *AAPB*

Loving God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you: help us so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may faithfully serve you, whose service is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** *APBA*

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

#### **SEQUENCE 1**

*Thematic*

Perfect Light of revelation,  
as you shone in the life of Jesus,  
whose epiphany we celebrate,  
so shine in us and through us,

[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)

## The Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 23rd, 2011

that we may become beacons of truth and compassion,  
enlightening all creation with deeds of justice and mercy. Amen.

*Or*

God,  
you spoke your word  
and revealed your good news in Jesus, the Christ.  
fill all creation with that word again,  
so that by proclaiming your joyful promises to all nations  
and singing of your glorious hope to all peoples,  
we may become one living body,  
your incarnate presence on the earth. Amen.

*Intercessory*

To God who welcomes all in love,  
let us pray for the good of the church  
and the concerns of those in need.

*Prayers of the People, concluding with:*

God of every land and nation,  
you have created all people  
and you dwell among us in Jesus Christ.  
Listen to the cries of those who pray to you,  
and grant that, as we proclaim the greatness of your name,  
All people will know the power of love at work in the world.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Or*

Sisters and brothers,  
let us lift our hearts in faith  
to the one who hears all prayers  
and holds close all those in need.

*Prayers of the People, concluding with:*

Holy God, you gather the whole universe  
into your radiant presence  
and continually reveal your Son as our Savior.  
Bring healing to all wounds,  
make whole all that is broken,  
speak truth to all illusion,  
and shed light in every darkness,  
that all creation will see your glory and know your Christ. Amen.

*Scripture*

God of Blazing light,  
through the power of the cross you shattered our darkness,  
scattering the fears that bind us  
and setting us free to live as your children.

## The Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 23rd, 2011

give us courage and conviction  
that we may joyfully turn and follow you  
into new adventures of faithful service,  
led by the light that shines  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

### SEQUENCE 2

*Presider or deacon*

As we follow the cross of Christ, let us pray to God who brings light into the darkness of the world.

*Deacon or other leader*

For the holy catholic church throughout the world.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For *N* our bishop, for presbyters, deacons, and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy gathering and for all who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this country, for all nations and their leaders, and for our community.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all those in danger and need: the sick and the suffering, prisoners, captives, and their families, the hungry, homeless, and oppressed.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the dying and the dead, and for those who care for them.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For ourselves, our families and friends, and all those we love.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

**To you, O Lord.**

*Presider*

God of dawning light, hear our fervent prayers today and give us the strength to put aside all cares and follow you in your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### SEQUENCE 3

That the kingdom of God might come near, let us pray, "Lord have mercy."

That all the world might join in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us pray,

**Lord have mercy**

That domination might yield to compassion among human beings. Let us pray,

**Lord have mercy**

## The Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 23rd, 2011

That families haunted by violence might find courage to cry for help. Let us pray,  
**Lord have mercy**

That our parish might listen to the needs of the poor and respond with integrity and compassion. Let us pray,  
**Lord have mercy**

That those preparing for baptism at Easter might die to sin and so have new life. Let us pray  
**Lord have mercy**

For mothers and fathers, that their gentleness and patience might be renewed. Let us pray, saying:  
**Lord have mercy**

We give thanks to you, O Christ, that your reign has been made known even among us, the least of your servants. **Amen.**

### SERMON STARTERS

#### 1 Corinthians 1: 10-12

A sermon celebrating and giving thanks for the sun could grow out of the image of light shining on those who were in darkness, which appears in the Isaiah passage and then is quoted in Matthew. This was discussed elsewhere.

Another possibility is to work off of the Corinthians' lesson:

Where Paul says, "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided?"

We might expand on his point and apply it to caring for creation.

People say, "I belong to the US, I belong to Nigeria, I belong to China...."

When in fact we all belong to the one planet earth, and we need to be united in our care for her. *By Tom Harries*

#### Reflection on Matthew 4: 13-16

A sermon celebrating and giving thanks for the sun could grow out of the image of light shining on those who were in darkness, which appears in the Isaiah passage and then is quoted in Matthew. Some ideas to play with:

- Before the birth of stars the universe was very dark.
- Before the birth of our sun, there was little light or warmth in this region of space that eventually became our solar system home.
- In the same way that Jesus enlightens and enlivens our spiritual lives, the Sun lights and powers our physical selves.
- Of course without light we cannot see.

## The Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 23rd, 2011

- But beyond that, almost all the energy we depend upon to power our bodies and our industry came from the sun and was stored in chemical form by plants and plankton.
- Enough light falls on the earth each day to provide all our energy needs many times over, had we but more effective ways of converting or utilizing it.
- I know it's a terrible word play, but one could say we are released from physical darkness and cold by the sun, and from spiritual darkness and suffering by the Son. One could move to a conversation about the need to limit the drivers of global climate change by talking about the fine balance between absorbing what we actually need and allowing the rest to bounce or radiate back into space. *By Tom Harries*

### **Matt 4:12-23 He returned to Galilee**

Prior to the account in today's Gospel, Jesus had spent 40 days in the wilderness of Judea in preparation for ministry...

Matthew describes the scenario....

**1. The Arrest of John** – John the Baptist's ministry had drawn to a close with his arrest & imprisonment at Machaerus. He had criticised Herod for taking his brother Philip's wife & now awaited his fate in prison – eventual beheading (Matt 14.10)

**2. The Area of Zebulun & Naphtali** – Jesus had left Nazareth where his own townsfolk had rejected him – *he went & lived in Capernaum v13* – a strategic centre for his HQ on the Via Maris – the way of the sea – an important trade route of the period... Someone has said:- *Galilee is the on the way to everywhere*. Josephus, historian & Governor, numbers 204 villages all with population of over 15,000 people. It is described as being *rich in soils & pasturage, producing every variety of tree*. It had suffered dreadfully in the Assyrian invasions of 734 & 732BC – *the people living in darkness (v16 & Is 9:1,2) – living in the land of the shadow of death*. They were to experience a new era – *a light has dawned* – Jesus – *the light of the world* – has come into their midst!

**3. The Arrival of Jesus** – *began to preach*

**a) the Message** – *repent for the kingdom of God is near...*

**b) the Messengers** – Jesus calls his disciples – Peter/Andrew & James/John – *Come, follow me & I will make you fishers of men* The work has begun – v23: *Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching, preaching & healing....* He made a major impact on the district as *large crowds v25* throughout the region *followed him*. Throughout the world crowds are still following Jesus... May we be numbered among the faithful!

*By Norman Porteus*

## WEB SOURCES

### **1 Corinthians 10:11**

The Authority of Scripture

<http://www.victorshepherd.on.ca/Sermons/authority%20of%20scripture.htm>

### **Matthew 4: 12-23**

Light from the margins

<http://sermonsyra.blogspot.com/2008/01/epiphany-3-light-from-margins.html>

**The Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 23rd, 2011**

**Seven questions about discipleship**

<http://www.victorshepherd.on.ca/Sermons/seven.htm>