

READINGS & PSALM

Jeremiah 31: 7 – 14

Psalm 147: 13 – 21

Ephesians 1: 3 – 14

John 1: (1 – 9), 10 – 18

INTRODUCTIONS

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

Jeremiah 31 : 7-14

Jeremiah speaks God's words, from the perspective when all nations and peoples shall be restored. The passage has many images which only found their full meaning in Christian vocabulary - God as father to his redeemed people, saviour, gatherer, shepherd and deliverer, giver of joy and gladness.

Ephesians 1 : 3-14

This letter begins with a hymn of praise to God for what he has done for us. The phrase 'in Christ' comes again and again: as God was in Christ Jesus, so we are one in Christ. God has made us his children and calls us to glory.

John 1: (1-9) 10-18

In so few but wonderful words, John captures the majesty and the mystery of God disclosing himself; his divine Word is made flesh. Christ was from the beginning, is now, and all who believe this are children of God.

PRAYERS

Prayers of Intercession

(based around a prayer from the Year A Intercessions book published by Epworth Press)

Heavenly Father, sometimes the world seems so dark,
all creation groans with the burdens of life and living.
But in Jesus, light has dawned, our King is come.
and we know that our understanding of you and what you want for us has been dim,
But the light is beginning to dawn in our hearts and minds too.
We begin to see your intentions for the world
our intention that new hope should spring from old experience
our intention to save the world

Jesus our King, your rule is one of justice, peace and righteousness,
and so we pray that the rulers of the world may echo your own justice,
so that the oppressed may receive righteousness
and where governments and rulers have chosen tyranny and oppression instead of love
and mercy, we pray for the people who suffer under harsh regimes and those who stand
up for the victims of oppression.

Jesus our King, your rule is one of overflowing generosity and bounty.
We pray for those who are caught in a spiral of ever increasing poverty.
We pray for the hungry, malnourished, homeless, dispossessed
Jesus our King, your rule is one of care for the needy and neglected

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we pray for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit
for those whose lives are precious to us, as well as to you.
We pray for...

Jesus our King, your rule is one of glory and blessing
Guide and inspire your church to be a beacon of your light
here in and throughout the world.
Jesus our King, shine your light into our hearts
and fill us with your gifts of forgiveness, peace, joy, love.
Give us life in all its fullness
We pray, in your name, O Christ our Lord and King
Amen.

Prayer of Intercession (from John 1:29-42)

Lamb of God

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

O Jesus, Lamb of God, we pray for your flock,
for those who are struggling through life
because they are hungry and don't know where their next meal will come from...
because they are living in the midst of war or civil unrest
and don't know what the future will bring...
because life is harder to cope with than usual at the moment...

Lamb of God

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

O Jesus, Lamb of God, we pray for your flock,
for those who feel they are outsiders
because they are refugees, speaking a strange language, at the mercy of strangers...
because they are hated by their neighbours due to centuries old rifts and suspicions...
because they feel different from other people in some way
- the colour of their skin, their religious beliefs, the level of their ability...

Lamb of God

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

O Jesus, Lamb of God, we pray for your flock,
for your lambs
for children who come second in their parents lives and priorities...
for children who are in care...
for children who suffer abuse of any kind...
for children who are seriously ill or dying...

Lamb of God

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

O Jesus, Lamb of God, we pray for your flock,
for those who are frail and weak,
for those elderly people who feel alone and vulnerable even in their own homes...
for those who mourn the loss of a loved one...
for those who are ill in body, mind or soul...
in particular we pray for.....

Lamb of God

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

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O Jesus, Lamb of God, we pray for your flock,
for those who are called to be your light to the nations...
we pray for your church and ourselves - help us as we do our work of bringing people to
you
Give us courage to witness to your love in our words and actions and in our prayers...
Lamb of God
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer. Amen

SERMON STARTER

John 1:10 -18 He was in the world

Part of John's famous Prologue to his Gospel as he focuses on Christ & his entry into the world...

- 1. The WORLD 10-13:** its failure with regard to Jesus to **a) recognise him** - *was in the world, & the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.*
b) receive him - *11He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him – they considered him a blasphemer – condemned him as a criminal – yet there is good news - 12But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.*
- 2. The WORD 14a:** Jesus - true & living word of God – **LOGOS** - to the Greek - the principle that controls & governs all things; - - to the Jew – refers to God himself – Creator & Sustainer of humanity and life...
- 3. The WONDER 14b:** that Jesus *became flesh and lived among us* – ministering in Israel... John is able to proclaim wonderfully: *we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 16From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17The law indeed was given through Moses; grace & truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.* We too share the wonder of that proclamation as we rejoice in the Good News of the Season - and proclaim *Love came down at Christmas..* By Norman Porteus.

WEB RESOURCES

There are plenty of resources but no sermon on The Text This Week site.

<http://www.textweek.com/prophets/jer31b.htm>

Jeremiah 31: 7-14

Commentary and preaching suggestions by Denis Bratcher

<http://www.cresourcei.org/lectionary/YearA/ABCchristmas2ot.html>

Shorter commentary notes on this bible passage.

<http://www.matthewmthomas.com/2009/01/02/deliberations-on-jeremiah-317-14/>

You are invited to a feast - one of the few sermons actually on this Bible passage.

<http://mattjudkins.com/2009/01/04/youre-invited-to-a-feast-a-sermon-on-jeremiah-317-14/>

Children

Very basic questions which might form basis of a children's address or focus of a school assembly.

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<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/chrs21les.htm>

On the baptism of Jesus.

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/baplord.htm>

Ephesians 1: 3 – 14

Good introduction to the passage on The Working Preacher site.

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=1/3/2010&tab=1

The strong will of God - one of a series of sermons on Ephesians on the Sermons from Seattle site. Ephesians 1:1,5, 9, 11; 5:17. In the first chapter, there are four clear and specific references to the will of God

http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/books_ephesians_strong.htm

Also on the Seattle site - Lavish Grace. "God has blessed us with the immeasurable riches of his grace which he freely lavished upon us in Christ Jesus."

http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/books_ephesians_lavish.htm

Good exposition of Paul's teaching in this passage. The Old Testament passages referred to later in the sermon are not the passages in our lectionary.

<http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~young/sermon6.html>

John 1: (1 – 9), 10 – 18

The Text This Week

<http://www.textweek.com/mkjnacts/jn1a.htm>

Customary good introduction on The Working Preacher site.

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=1/3/2010&tab=1

Sermon with two possible introductions on the Sermons from Seattle site.

http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_b_the_word_became_flesh.htm

Sr. Joan DeLapane is the Director of the D.Min program in preaching at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis. Her sermon on the Words were made flesh is at:

http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/delaplane_4312.htm