

## Sunday, January 15, 2023 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

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### Introduction

Today's gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus' baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.

### Prayer of the Day

Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, by your Spirit hold us forever, that through your grace we may worship you and faithfully serve you, follow you and joyfully find you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### First Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

*Here the servant, identified as Israel, speaks for herself and describes her honored mission. Called before her birth like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, the servant is not only to restore Israel. The servant's ultimate assignment is to bring news of God's victory to the ends of the earth. God in faithfulness has chosen Israel for this task.*

<sup>1</sup>Listen to me, O coastlands,  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!  
The LORD called me before I was born,  
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.

<sup>2</sup>He made my mouth like a sharp sword,  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me a polished arrow,  
in his quiver he hid me away.

<sup>3</sup>And he said to me, "You are my servant,  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

<sup>4</sup>But I said, "I have labored in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;  
yet surely my cause is with the LORD,  
and my reward with my God."

<sup>5</sup>And now the LORD says,  
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him,

and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,  
and my God has become my strength—  
<sup>6</sup>he says,  
“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

<sup>7</sup>Thus says the LORD,  
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,  
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,  
the slave of rulers,  
“Kings shall see and stand up,  
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,  
because of the LORD, who is faithful,  
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

## **Psalm 40:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>I waited patiently up- | on the LORD,  
who stooped to me and | heard my cry.

<sup>2</sup>**The LORD lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the | miry clay,  
and set my feet upon a high cliff, making my | footing sure.**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise | to our God;  
many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust | in the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>**Happy are they who trust | in the LORD!  
They do not turn to enemies or to those who | follow lies.**

<sup>5</sup>Great are the wonders you have done, O LORD my God! In your plans for us, none can be  
com- | pared with you!

Oh, that I could make them known and tell them! But they are more than | I can count.

<sup>6</sup>**Sacrifice and offering you do | not desire;  
you have opened my ears: burnt-offering and sin-offering you have | not required.**

<sup>7</sup>And so I said, “Here I | am; I come.  
In the scroll of the book it is writ- | ten of me:

<sup>8</sup>**‘I love to do your will, | O my God;  
your law is | deep within me.’”**

<sup>9</sup>I proclaimed righteousness in the | great assembly;  
I have not restrained my lips, O | LORD, you know.

<sup>10</sup>**I have not hidden your righteousness in my heart; I have spoken of your  
faithfulness and | your deliverance;  
I have not concealed your steadfast love and truth from the | great assembly.**

<sup>11</sup>You are the LORD; do not withhold your compas- | sion from me;  
may your steadfast love and your truth continually | keep me safe.

## **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

*Though God's church in Corinth is a fractious congregation beset with many conflicts, Paul opens this letter by spotlighting the multiple ways God has enriched and sustained its life as part of the divine call into the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

<sup>1</sup>Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

<sup>2</sup>To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—<sup>6</sup>just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—<sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Gospel: John 1:29-42**

*John the Baptist's witness to Jesus initiates a chain of testimony as his disciples begin to share with others what they have found.*

<sup>29</sup>[John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"<sup>30</sup>This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup>I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup>And John testified,

“I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup>I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup>And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

<sup>35</sup>The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup>and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” <sup>37</sup>The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup>When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” <sup>39</sup>He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. <sup>40</sup>One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. <sup>41</sup>He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). <sup>42</sup>He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

## Prayers of Intercession

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need, saying “Merciful God,” and responding, “receive our prayer.”

*A brief silence.*

Put a new song in the mouth of your church. Inspire the baptized to tell of your faithfulness, sharing the good news of your salvation throughout the earth. Bless the witness of missionaries (*synodical mission starts and missionaries supported by the congregation may be named*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

The waters of baptism call us into life in the Spirit. Preserve the world’s waters: protect them from pollution, support plants and animals who depend on them, and bring rain in places of drought. Guide us in protecting local waterways (*especially*) and in responding to devastating floods. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

In Jesus you are the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Show your mercy to all nations. Direct leaders to do your will; fill governing bodies with righteousness; equip judges with discernment and compassion. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You incline your ear to all who cry to you. Draw near to individuals and communities suffering violence, injustice, illness, or poverty. Hide them in the shadow of your hand and make us signs of your faithfulness to all in need (*We pray especially for . . .*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You are glorified in the servants you have called. With Martin Luther King Jr., give us bold trust in you. Even when it feels like a sharp sword or polished arrow, give us courage to receive your call to repentance and racial justice. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

In every place and time, you have sanctified your people. We praise you for the testimony of those who have died in the faith. Strengthen us as we wait for the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

**Amen.**

## ***A reflection for this Second Sunday after Epiphany...***

### Seeing and Telling Who Jesus Is

The time after Epiphany is the church's time to invite us to come and see who this one born in a manger will be, and to discover what this one born to a young woman might mean for us and for the world. Today's gospel tells us that Jesus is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," "the Son of God," and "the Messiah." These appellations show us that the coming of Jesus has meaning not just for those who follow him, but for all people and all the world. In the gospel, neither John nor Andrew can contain their testimony about who Jesus is. They have had an encounter with Christ that has had such an impact on their lives that they cannot help but tell others about it. John tells his disciples and everyone else within earshot about Jesus. Andrew runs to find his brother, Peter, and brings him to Jesus so that Peter might have the same life-changing encounter he himself has experienced.

We are invited to "come and see" who Jesus is. We are reminded that God's forgiveness and love proclaimed in Jesus Christ is meant to be good news for us and for all people. As we encounter Christ, our lives are changed. Like John and Andrew in today's gospel, we are called to share with others who we have seen Jesus to be.

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