


Authority and reconciliation

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist
1 October 2023
Sunday 26A

Preparing for Worship Today

- Welcome to this service of worship at Mark the Evangelist!
- Congregational responses are printed in ***bold italics***.
- If you get here early enough, **please read through the text of today's readings prior to our hearing them**. The text can be found at the end of the order of service. We will have brief conversation/response time to the readings after hearing them, and before the sermon – all to make our hearing a little sharper!
- Pray for those who will be leading us in our worship today!
-  This symbol is an invitation to use the rattles and shakers during the hymn or song!

SD

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A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Prelude JS Bach, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*

The Gathering of the People of God

Processional

If you are able, please stand as the Scriptures are brought into the worship space.

Call to Worship

The Lord be with you!
And also with you!

Let us worship God,
***who leads the humble
in what is right!***
cf. Ps 25.8

Prayer of invocation

Hymn 143 Immortal, invisible, God only wise



The Word Spoken: Scripture and Preaching

The Testimony of Scripture

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.

Philippians 2:1-11 *Obedient to the point of death on a cross*

Psalms 25:1-10 *Oh my God, in you I trust*

REFRAIN: Organ, then cantor, then all together (sung also at the end).
The psalm text is then sung responsively to the TONE

REFRAIN Hal H. Hopson

God is our ref - uge; God is our strength.

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TONE

*

Refrain

¹ To you, O Lord, I lift | up my soul;
O my God, in | you I trust;

let me not be | put to shame;

let not my enemies triumph | over me.

² Let none who look to you be | put to shame,

but let the treacherous be | shamed and frustrated.

³ Make me to know your | ways, O Lord,

and teach | me your paths.

⁴ Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you have I hoped all | the day long.

⁵ Remember, Lord, your compas- | -sion and love,
for they are from | ever-lasting.

⁶ Remember not the sins of my youth or | my trans-gressions,
but think on me in your goodness,
O Lord, according to your | steadfast love.

⁷ Gracious and upright | is the Lord;
therefore shall he teach sinners | in the way.

⁸ He will guide the humble in doing right
and teach his way | to the lowly.

⁹ All the paths of the Lord are | mercy and truth
to those who keep his covenant | and his testimonies.

REFRAIN

Matthew 21:23-27 *By what authority?*

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

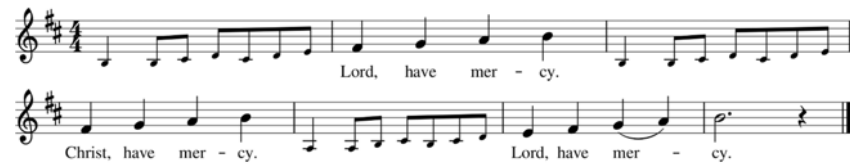
The Preaching of the Word

*The sermon text will normally be available
after worship and online*

LITBIT: Witness to Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit is the content of the Word of God, and this alone constitutes the essence of preaching: 'and the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth' (1 Jn 5:7). The ambo is the place where the sacrament of the word takes place, and therefore it must never be turned into a tribune for the proclamation of even the most elevated, most positive, but only human truth, only human wisdom.

ALEXANDER SCHMEMMANN

Prayer of Confession



Lord, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

Declaration of Forgiveness

(Please stand if you are able)

...hear, then, Christ's word of grace to us:
Your sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

Doxology



Glo - ry to God... in the high - est and
peace to Gods' peo - ple on earth. Lord God... heav'n-ly king, al-migh-ty God. and
Fa-ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you... your glo-ry.
Lord Je-susChrist, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat-ed at the right hand of the
Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer. For you a - lone... are the
ho - ly one, You a - lone... are the Lord, you a - lone are the most high,



Je - sus Christ with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the glo-ry of God the Fa - ther.
A - men. A - men. A - - - men.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

The Nicene Creed

***We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.***

***For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day he rose again
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.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father,
 who with the Father and the Son
 is worshipped and glorified,
 who has spoken through the prophets.
 We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
 We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
 We look for the resurrection of the dead,
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

Prayers of the People

(Names for inclusion in the prayers may be recorded in the book in the narthex)

The Visible Word: Eucharist

Hymn 521 Lord Christ, at your first eucharist you prayed

(If you are able, please remain standing until after the Lord's Prayer)

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(The prayer continues...)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might, hea - ven and earth are
 full of your glo - ry, ho - sa - na in the high - est. Bles - sed is he who comes in the name of the
 Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na - in the high - est!

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory,
 hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest!
 Hosanna in the highest!***

(The prayer continues...)

The Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins,
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
 now and for ever. Amen.***

(The people sit)

The Breaking of the Bread

...Holy things to make a holy people...

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on
 us, have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world: have mer - cy on us, have mer - cy on us Lamb of God, you
 take a - way the sin of the world: grant us peace, grant us peace.

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace, grant us peace.***

...Let us receive what we are,
let us become what we receive
The body of Christ

The Communion

The Uniting Church recognises this Table as the Lord's and, so, open to all who would normally commune in their home congregations.

GATHERING: *We'll gather in a circle around the table for the distribution of the elements; please wait until all have received and the prayer is said before returning to your seats.*

If you can't stand or walk to the front but would like to receive communion, please raise your hand if the celebrant has not already noticed you.

Offering

Many members now make their offering by electronic transfer; the plate will be passed for those who prefer to make cash/envelope offerings. The prayer dedicating the offerings 'captures' the full range of gifts.

Notices

The Sending Forth of the People of God

Hymn 531 Sent forth by God's blessing

Word of Mission and Blessing

Postlude D Buxtehude, *Ciacona in E-moll*



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We'd love to hear your feedback on the service.

Our email address is:

enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

Our website is:

<http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/>

TODAY'S READINGS

Read the following texts-for-the-day before the service and consider:

First Sunday

- *What makes this text strange?*
- *How might this text "strange" us?*

Philippians 2.1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name

that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Matthew 21.23-27

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' ²⁴Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" ²⁶But if we say, "Of human origin", we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.' ²⁷So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.'

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Clare & Francis of Assisi, faithful servants



Francis of Assisi (c.1182-1226) and Clare of Assisi (c.1194-1253) are among the best-loved saints in the Christian tradition. Over the centuries they have captured the hearts and imaginations of men and women of all nationalities and creeds. People everywhere have been attracted to their manifest spirituality, their Christlike nature, and their genuine simplicity, devotion and compassion. Their lives are increasingly relevant to

today's world: in 1979 Pope John Paul II named Francis as 'Patron Saint of Ecology' and recent studies of Clare portray her not only as a fervent disciple of Francis but also as a new leader of women and 'a light for our time'. Francis and Clare shared a similar vision—a love of the crucified Christ and a desire to lead a biblically-inspired, simple life modelled on the example of Christ in the Gospels. The chief characteristics of their spirituality may be treated under four headings: poverty, contemplation or prayer, mission and creation.

Francis and Clare embraced voluntary poverty because they wanted to imitate Jesus who had made himself poor for us (2 Cor. 8.9). Christ's freely-chosen material poverty defined their whole manner of life. Francis' understanding of poverty was shaped by Christ's total obedience to the will of the Father. He saw in Jesus' obedience a revelation of the humility of God. Clare, on the other hand, had a more ascetical understanding of poverty. She focussed her devotion on the 'poor Christ'. For Clare, the spiritual life consisted of conforming oneself to the poor Christ by the observance of the most perfect poverty. Poverty was the door to contemplation. By living in poverty, Clare maintained, one might enter upon the 'narrow' way that leads to the kingdom of heaven. Following Christ's example, both Clare and Francis vowed to use only that which was needed and to live without owning anything — no lands, no income, no saving up 'for a rainy day', no possessions beyond what was needed for daily life. Poverty was a source of their joy and freedom. It was a treasure to be sought, the 'pearl of great price'.

Both Clare and Francis emphasized the close association between poverty and prayer (contemplation). For Clare, the 'poor Christ' was a mirror into which she gazes. She was awe-struck by the poverty of Him who was placed in the manger. She was overwhelmed by the mystery of God's love that led Christ to

[contd...]

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Clare & Francis of Assisi, faithful servants [contd...]

suffer on the Cross. Her prayer gives us insight into her life of contemplation: 'Gaze upon Him, consider (Him), contemplate Him.' Her way of being was to be a mirror to others living in the world. Clare was careful to point out that no other work was to supersede the spirit of prayer and devotion. For Francis, however, contemplation was focused on the Eucharist. Participation in the Eucharist was tantamount to the apostles' own experience of being with the earthly and incarnate Jesus.

Thus, the mystery of the Eucharist enabled Francis to 'see' the poor and crucified Christ and to respond in a similar form of humility. The simple prayer that Francis taught his followers expresses his intense devotion to the Eucharist: 'We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all your churches throughout the world, and we bless You, for through Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.'

Francis' idea of poverty was also linked to his understanding of mission. In poverty Francis found a freedom that fostered reconciliation. In the spirit of poverty he urged his followers to adopt a simple, non-polemical style of missionary presence, to renounce any desire to dominate, and to minister mostly among the poor. Francis was accustomed to saying, 'The poor are sacraments of Christ for in them we see the poor and humble Christ.' When a brother asked if it were proper to feed some robbers, he responded affirmatively, for in every person he saw a possible thief and in every thief a possible brother or sister.

Finally, Francis' concern for the environment was also shaped by his devotion to Christ. While the whole created order is a reminder of God's goodness and to be received as gift, there are certain things that are worthy of our special love and care because they symbolise aspects of the nature and activity of Christ. Thus, rocks reminded Francis of the rock that was Christ, lambs of the Lamb of God, trees of the Cross, and lights of the Light of the World. In Francis' magnificent hymn, the 'Canticle of Brother Sun', he expresses his vision of a reconciled world that reflects the poor and crucified Christ. This, it is commonly said, is the deepest meaning of the Francis' stigmata: his being becomes what he 'sees', he lives the life of Christ as literally as it is humanly possible.

Contributed by William Emilsen

The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle

Colombia

Indigenous people lived in Colombia long before it was colonized by the Spanish in the 16th century. It became an independent country in 1819. Since then, two political parties, the conservatives and the liberals, have dominated the political scene. Socially, Colombia has been divided between the ruling elite and the poor masses. In the 20th century, several revolutionary movements have fought guerilla wars. Two of these are still active, but have lost much of the popular support. To counter the guerillas, the government has favoured the development of paramilitary groups. The rural population has been caught in between, and has suffered massive oppression, destruction and killings. Violence is also rampant in the cities, partly criminal, partly political. Production and trade of drugs, kidnapping, etc., have corrupted the social texture of the country. In this context, the Catholic Church which is the majority church, has sought to mediate in often dangerous conflict situations. Several churches and organizations have formed an ecumenical network, to accompany communities who are victims of social and political violence. Protestant missions started in the 19th century, and the Protestant churches, although in a minority, are actively involved in promoting peace and defending human rights. They are organized in the Evangelical Council of Colombia. In the 20th century Pentecostal and independent churches have established themselves in Colombia. About 50 percent of the Protestants are Pentecostal. The Evangelical Confederation of Colombia is affiliated with the WEA.

People to commemorate this week

Clare & Francis of Assisi, faithful servants

Ecumenical PrayeCycle

Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela

LECTIONARY READINGS 08 OCTOBER 2023

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46

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