



The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist  
15 October 2023  
Sunday 28A

### *Preparing for Worship Today*

- We welcome **Daniel Broadstock** today as our guest preacher
- 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!

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### **A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

**Prelude** JS Bach, *Fughetta: Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her*

### *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!***

Come, let us give thanks to the LORD, who is good,  
***The LORD's love is everlasting.*** *(Psalm 106.1)*

Let us worship God...

#### **Prayer of invocation**

**Hymn** 447 Lord, your almighty word

## *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.***

Exodus 32:1-14 *I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are*

Psalms 106:1-6, 19-23 *Had not Moses stood in the breach*

<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
***for his steadfast love endures forever.***

<sup>2</sup>Who can utter the mighty doings of the LORD,  
***or declare all his praise?***

<sup>3</sup>Happy are those who observe justice,  
***who do righteousness at all times.***

<sup>4</sup>Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people;  
***help me when you deliver them;***

<sup>5</sup>that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in  
the gladness of your nation,  
***that I may glory in your heritage.***

<sup>6</sup>Both we and our ancestors have sinned;  
***we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly.***

<sup>19</sup>They made a calf at Horeb and worshiped a cast image.

<sup>20</sup>***They exchanged the glory of God  
for the image of an ox that eats grass.***

<sup>21</sup>They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt,

<sup>22</sup>***wondrous works in the land of Ham,  
and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.***

<sup>23</sup>Therefore he said he would destroy them— had not Moses, his  
chosen one, stood in the breach before him,  
***to turn away his wrath from destroying them.***

Matthew 22:1-14 *The wedding is ready, but those invited were not  
worthy*

This is the gospel of the Lord.

***Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.***

### **The Preaching of the Word**

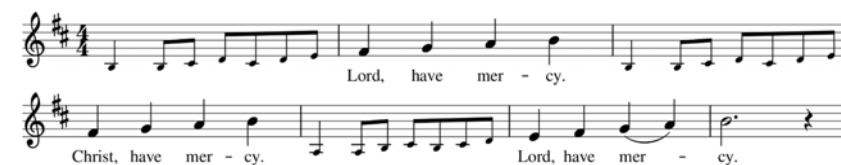
*The sermon text will normally be available  
after worship and online*

*A 'sermon of stillness' – a moment for quiet reflection – usually follows the preaching*

### **Prayer of Confession**

**LITBIT:** ...as Christians we cannot learn to confess our sins unless we are forgiven. Indeed  
as has often been stressed, prior to forgiveness we cannot know we are sinners. For it is  
our tendency to want to be forgivers such that we remain basically in a power relation to  
those we have forgiven. But it is the great message of the Gospel that we will only find  
our lives in that of Jesus to the extent that we are capable of accepting forgiveness. But  
accepting forgiveness does not come easily, because it puts us literally out of control.

STANLEY HAUERWAS



**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\_ for\_ your glo-ry.  
Lord Je-susChrist, on-ly Son of theFa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sins of theworld: have mer - cy on us; youare 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.***

## Affirmation of Faith: We are a pilgrim people

*Adapted from the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia*

***We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
We proclaim Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen One,  
confessing him as Lord  
to the glory of God the Father.***

***In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
we acclaim Jesus as the Lord of the Church,  
the Head over all things,  
the beginning of a new creation.***

***We acknowledge that we live and work  
between the time of Christ's death and resurrection  
and the final consummation of all things  
which he will bring.***

***We are a pilgrim people,  
always on the way towards a promised goal;  
on the way Christ feeds us with word and sacraments,  
and we have the gift of the Spirit  
in order that we may not lose the way.***

***We will live and work within the faith and unity  
of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church,  
bearing witness to that unity  
which is both Christ's gift and his will.***

***We affirm that every member of the Church  
is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified.  
Together with all the people of God,  
we will serve the world for which Christ died.  
And we await with hope the day of the Lord Jesus.***

## Prayers of the People

### *The Visible Word: Eucharist*

**LITURGY:** The Eucharist is a mystery not because it is mysterious, but because it is a sign of God's secret purpose, which is to unite all things in Christ. In the Eucharist we celebrate that the mess of human history, with its violence and sin, its wars and genocides, is somehow, in ways that we cannot now understand, on its way to the kingdom. It is God's will that we be gathered into unity, reconciled with each other. And so we begin the Eucharist asking the forgiveness of our brothers and sisters, the angels and the saints, the whole vast community of the kingdom. It is a sign that we are willing to be gathered into God's peace with the rest of creation.

TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE

**Hymn 394 Christ is risen!**

*(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.**

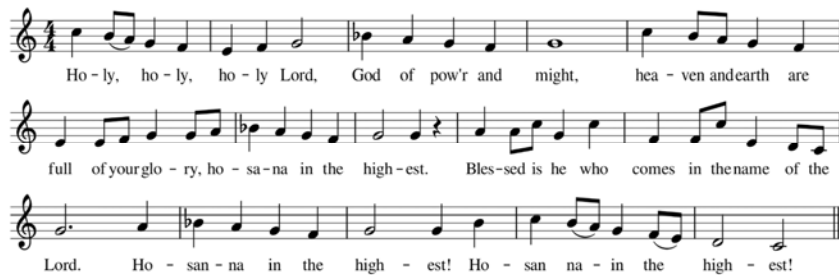
Lift up your hearts.

**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**

...The gifts of God for the people of God...



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** 573 A charge I have to keep

**Word of Mission and Blessing**

**Postlude** D Buxtehude, *Fuga in C*

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

Our email address is:

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Our website is:

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

## TODAY'S READINGS

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

*What is "wrong" with these texts? How would you fix them?*

### **Exodus 32.1-14**

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' <sup>2</sup>Aaron said to them, 'Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.' <sup>3</sup>So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>He took the gold from them, formed it in a mould, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' <sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a festival to the LORD.' <sup>6</sup>They rose early the next day, and offered burnt-offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD said to Moses, 'Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; <sup>8</sup>they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"' <sup>9</sup>The LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. <sup>10</sup>Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.'

<sup>11</sup> But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, 'O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup>Why should the

Egyptians say, “It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth”? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup>Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, “I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.” <sup>14</sup>And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

### Matthew 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup>The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup>Again he sent other slaves, saying, “Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.” <sup>5</sup>But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup>while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup>The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to his slaves, “The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.” <sup>10</sup>Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup> ‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, <sup>12</sup>and he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?” And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen.’

## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### Teresa of Avila & John of the Cross, people of prayer



#### Teresa of Avila

Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada was a mystic, reformer of the church and teacher of Christian spiritual life. With John of the Cross she is co-founder of the Discalced (or “shoeless”) Carmelites, who observe a stricter form of monastic life than other communities.

Teresa was born in 1515 in the northern Spanish town of Avila and died at the age of 67 in 1582. Her family, probably converted from Judaism some generations earlier, were merchants and relatively well-off. She was one of 10 children, and a lively, extroverted and idealistic child who, aged about 7, set off with her favourite brother to convert ‘the Moors’ or be beheaded for Christ. An uncle turned them back at the edge of Avila

She entered the Carmelite community of the Incarnation in Avila at the age of 20, with more determination than enthusiasm and seems to have struggled at first, with periods of paralysis that led to a prolonged stay with her family. However, she persevered, and as a contemporary Carmelite community remembers ‘her great work of reform began with herself’ with careful observance of the way of life and increasing understanding of God in prayer as the focus and source of all.

A more serious group within the relatively easy-going convent of the Incarnation became interested in living the earlier traditions of Carmelite life, and in 1562 after delays and public outcry against it, Teresa was confirmed as leader of a reformed community at the Convent of St Joseph also in Avila. Over the next 20 years her life combined the practicalities of leadership with intense interior prayer, From the age of 51 as she founded 17 new houses across Spain and expanded the reform to include the Carmelite men through her collaboration with John of the Cross, although controversy continued and she often had to arrive in town after nightfall to avoid causing a riot

Her most significant writing is her autobiography (covering up to 1562), *The Way of Perfection* (for the instruction of her Sisters), *The Book of Foundations* (a feisty account of establishing new convents), and *The Interior Castle* (the work considered the best account of her spiritual insight).

Her compelling image of the interior castle stands for the human soul itself. God dwells in the central apartments of the castle, and Teresa traces the journey of the spiritual life from the outer dungeons through other stages in the development of prayerful awareness to the luminous centre. Essentially, being ‘at one’ with God, surrendered to God, the human soul is also at the centre of itself.

Teresa’s prayer also included frank exchanges like that after her cart had overturned and she had watched her luggage fall into the mud. Asking for an explanation in prayer, she understood Jesus to tell her that this was how he treated his friends. She remarked ‘Then it is no wonder you have so few.’

[contd...]



## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### Teresa of Avila & John of the Cross, people of prayer [contd...]

The apparently flippant remark underpins a more profound theological conviction, that God is to be trusted and that suffering is not necessarily to be avoided. The Way of Perfection develops this idea that growth in spiritual life involves a merging of the self with God's will.

I believe that love is the measure of our ability to bear crosses, whether great or small. So if you have this love, try not to let the prayers you make to so great a Lord be words of mere politeness, but brace yourselves to suffer what God's Majesty desires. For if you give God your will in any other way, you are just showing the Lord a precious stone, making as if to give it and begging God to take it, and then, when God's hand reaches out to do so, taking it back and holding on to it tightly. Such mockery is no fit treatment for One who endured so much for us. ... Unless we make a total surrender of our will so that the Lord may do in all things what is best for us in accordance with the divine will, we will never be allowed to drink of the fountain of living water.

Teresa distrusted mystical experience as a distraction from authentic prayer, but could not argue with the reality of what came to her unsought. One such occasion underlined the personal quality of God's love for her and for each person. She saw a child in a vision asking 'Who are you?'. She replied 'I am Teresa of Jesus, who are you?'. He answered her, 'I am Jesus of Teresa!'.

In 1970 she became one of the first two women acknowledged as a 'Doctor of the Church' within the Roman Catholic tradition, so that her writing sits alongside Augustine, Ambrose, Basil and a shortlist of others whose teaching is deemed to have 'universal significance'.

*By Dr Katharine Massam*

**HYMN** – written by Ross Mackinnon, based on a prayer of Teresa of Avila

Suggested tune: NIAGARA (TIS 530)

Christ has no body now, but ours;  
No hands, no feet on earth, but ours.  
Ours are the eyes with which Christ looks  
Compassion into all the world.  
Ours are the feet with which Christ walks  
to serve all those who are in need.  
Ours are the hands which Christ can use  
To love and touch and bless the world.  
Ours are the hands, ours are the feet  
Ours are the eyes, for Christ to use.  
His body then, we take the road  
To love and serve as he has done.

[contd...]

## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### Teresa of Avila & John of the Cross, people of prayer [contd...]

#### John of the Cross

John de Yepes, known as John of the Cross was poet, mystic and reformer, born in 1542 near Avila in Spain. His writing makes clear the spiritual significance of 'the dark night of the soul'. John became a Carmelite Friar and got to know Teresa of Avila and supported her work for reform within the Carmelite community, introducing the movement to the men. He was imprisoned at Toledo by opponents of the reform in 1577, and treated with great cruelty. He wrote his first poems in this period. After nine months, he escaped and held leadership roles in the reformed group in the 1580s. However, as the reformed group also split, John supported the moderates, was removed from office, and sent to a remote community in Andalusia in 1591. He died there after a severe, three-month illness. It was only after his death that the significance of his thought and work for the community was recognised.

John's writings flowed from his own experience, and are recognised for their literary beauty as well as their spiritual significance. There are three poems, all with related commentaries by him: *The Dark Night of the Soul*, *The Spiritual Canticle* and *The Living Flame of Love*, as well as the famous second commentary on Dark Night known as *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*. An emphasis on trust is God's grace not worldly success is typical of his thought.

If only people would understand how impossible it is to reach God's riches and wisdom except by passing through the thicket of toil and suffering! The soul must first put aside every comfort and desire of its own. A soul that truly yearns for divine wisdom begins by yearning to enter the thicket of the Cross.

Saint Paul therefore urges the Ephesians 'not to be disheartened by tribulations' but to be courageous, 'rooted and grounded in love so that you may grasp, with the saints, the breadth and length and height and depth and the all-surpassing love of the knowledge of Christ, so as to attain the fullness of God himself.' For the gate to these riches of God's wisdom is the Cross; many desire the consoling joy to which the Cross leads, but few desire the Cross itself. (*The Spiritual Canticle*, 37)

With Teresa of Avila, John's writing on the experience of prayer and growth in the spiritual life are regarded as having a unique authority.

*By Dr Katharine Massam*

## The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

[www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle](http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle)

### Belize

For hundreds of years, Belize was populated by around a million Mayan Indians, whose advanced civilization reached its zenith between 250 and 900. The first reference to European settlement was in 1638, when British woodcutters known as Baymen settled there. Nearby Spanish settlements attacked the Baymen until the 1798, when the settlers won a victory with British naval support. The area became British Honduras in 1840 and finally gained independence as Belize in 1981. Christianity came to Belize in 1848, when Roman Catholics arrived from Mexico. Today, the Roman Catholic church is still the largest Christian group. Methodists and British Anglicans form the second and third largest groups.

### Mexico

Indigenous civilizations (e.g. Maya, Aztec) existed in Mexico before the Spanish colonized it in 1539 and eliminated much of the Indian population. Mexico achieved independence in 1821. It lost half of its territory in the war with the US in 1846. The Mexican revolution of 1910-17, under Emiliano Zapata, brought dictatorship to an end. A new constitution was adopted, but the ideals, including land reform, were not carried through during the increasingly corrupt reign of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, from 1929 to 2000. Another uprising occurred in 1994, among the indigenous population of Chiapas, in opposition to Mexico's signing of the North America Free Trade Area. The Zapatistas, as they call themselves, initiated an alternative popular movement and became a focal group for the struggle against neo-liberalism and globalization. Mexico has developed a strong economy, based on oil production and modern industry. The relatively high per capita income hides however a highly unequal distribution of wealth between a small elite and the majority of urban and rural poor, mostly Indians. Many Mexicans try to migrate to the USA. Mexico was Christianized by the Catholic Church from the beginning of colonization. Protestant missions came in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Presbyterian Church is the largest Protestant church, followed by the Seventh-day Adventists, the Union of Evangelical Indigenous Churches, the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal), the Baptists, Methodists, and others. Pentecostals represent about 25 percent of all the non-Catholic Christians. The Evangelical Fellowship of Mexico is affiliated with the WEA.

### People to commemorate this week

of Avila & John of the Cross, people of prayer

### Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico

### LECTIONARY READINGS 22 OCTOBER 2023

Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22

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