

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist
January 28 2024
Epiphany 4B

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!



A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Prelude

The Gathering of the People of God

Sung Processional *(TIS 52 v.1)*

If you are able, please stand when the cantor sings the first line, and sing as the Scriptures are brought into the worship space:

***Let us sing to the God of salvation,
let us sing to the Lord our rock!
Let us come to God's house with thanksgiving,
let us come before the Lord and sing!
Praise our Maker, praise our saviour,
praise the Lord our everlasting king!
Every throne must bow before him,
God is Lord of everything!***

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Call to Worship

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Come, praise and give thanks to the LORD!
***We give thanks
in the midst of the congregation.***

The LORD sends redemption to his people
and commands his covenant forever! (Psalm 111.1,9)

Prayer of invocation

Hymn 432 Christ is made the sure foundation

With the Children

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.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 *For us there is one God and one Lord*

Psalms 111 *The beginning of wisdom* PCS p.342n.2

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

Let the peo - ple praise you, O God; —

— let all the peo - ple praise you.

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TONE



¹ Alleluia. I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the company of the faithful and in the | congregation.

² The works of the LORD are great,
sought out by all who de- | -light in them.

³ His work is full of majesty and honour
and his righteousness en- | -dures forever.

⁴ He appointed a memorial for his marvellous deeds;
the LORD is gracious and full | of compassion.

⁵ He gave food to those who feared him;
he is ever mindful | of his covenant.

⁶ He showed his people the power of his works
in giving them the heritage | of the nations.

⁷ The works of his hands are truth and justice;
all his command- | -ments are sure.

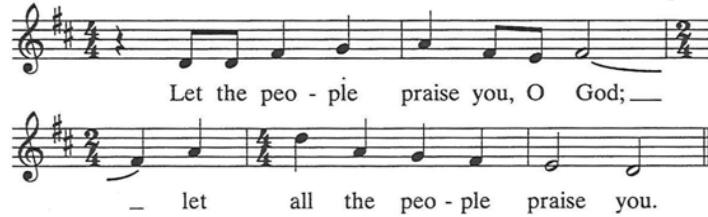
⁸ They stand fast for ever and ever;
they are done in | truth and equity.

⁹ He sent redemption to his people; he commanded his covenant for ever;
holy and awesome | is his name.

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have those who live by it;
his praise end- | -ures for ever.

REFRAIN

Hal H. Hopson



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Mark 1:21-28 *A new teaching, with 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*

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

Prayer of Confession



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



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 506 Author of love divine

(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...)



***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 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 585 I heard the voice of Jesus say

Word of Mission and Blessing

Postlude

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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 be ready for a brief conversation about them before we hear them read!

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him.

⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

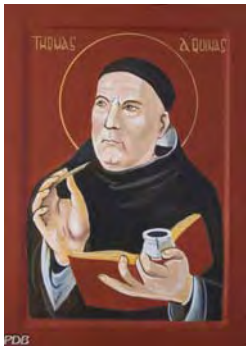
⁷It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Mark 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’ ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ ²⁶And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, ‘What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.’ ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Thomas Aquinas, Christian thinker



Thomas Aquinas was one of the greatest philosophers and theologians in the history of the Church. Born around the year 1225, he lived at a critical juncture in the flowering of Christian life and theology.

At the age of five, he was admitted into the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino where his studies began. Diligent in study, his teachers quickly noticed his meditative disposition and devotion to prayer. Indeed, tender age, he would frequently ask his teachers "What is God?"

In his adolescence, he was transferred by his family to the University of Naples where he came into contact with the fledgling new religious movement of friars who combined the contemplative life of the monks with the active life of teachers and pastors. In particular, he was drawn to the life of the Order of Preachers, an order of friars recently established by St. Dominic. Over the protests of his family, he decided to commit himself to a life of prayer, study, preaching and teaching in the Order of St. Dominic.

His formation and study in the Order saw him come under the tutelage of St. Albert the Great whose interest in the re-emergence of the philosophy of Aristotle in the Latin West quickly rubbed off on his student. In these classes, Thomas' humble silence was misinterpreted as dullness so much so that he was called the "dumb ox". Albert, however, could see the genius of his student and proclaimed that one day the entire world will hear the bellowing of his teaching.

[contd ...]

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Thomas Aquinas, Christian thinker [contd ...]

Having achieved his bachelors and raised to the priesthood, Aquinas began his tireless work of prayer, preaching, teaching and writing. Appointed to the Dominican house in Paris, Aquinas would twice occupy the chair of theology at the most prestigious of medieval universities, the University of Paris. Indeed, the university system itself as well as the friars movement were Church responses to the increased urbanisation of medieval Europe where more and more people sought a living in the merchant trade of the cities. During his teaching career, Aquinas became great friends with a shining light of the recently founded Franciscan Order, St. Bonaventure. Though they would have their academic differences, the two remained life-long friends.

Thomas' writings over the course of his life were prodigious. Though he lived less than fifty years, he composed more than sixty works on Sacred Scripture, theology, ethics, politics, catechesis and spirituality. His greatest was the Summa Theologiae or 'summary of theology' wherein he treated of salvation history as the great unfolding of God's truth and love in creation and its return through the grace of redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.

However, following a sublime mystical encounter in prayer, Thomas could see that human words were incapable of grasping the greatness of the truth, beauty and goodness of God. One must ultimately fall silent before the majesty of the divine. He put his pen down, the Summa remained unfinished and God called him to Himself a year later in 1274.

Brother Thomas Azzi

The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle

Algeria

Algeria is the second largest country in Africa after Sudan. It became independent in 1962 after more than 130 years of French colonial rule and a bitter liberation struggle. In cooperation with the small churches in the country and the Algerian government, the WCC, CIMADE and other ecumenical agencies founded in 1962 the Christian Committee for Service in Algeria. After a period of emergency relief, the CCSA developed a vast reforestation programme. By 1965, more than 22 million fruit and timber trees had been planted and another 50 million seedlings were handed over to the government. Ever since independence, the National Liberation Front (FLN) has dominated politics in Algeria, although a surprising first round electoral success of the fundamentalist Islamic National Front (FIS) in 1991 spurred the army to intervene, to prevent the Islamists from forming a government. Since then Algeria has struggled through a continuous low level civil conflict between Islamic activists and the secular state apparatus. This terrorism has had a profound impact among the Algerian population, of whom nearly 100,000 were killed before the FIS's armed wing was disbanded in January 2000. In 2005 the population voted in favour of a referendum on national reconciliation. While progress towards peace is slowly being made, better living conditions for the people and democratization continue to be Algeria's greatest challenge.

Morocco

The original inhabitants of Morocco are the Berbers, who have lived there for more than 3000 years. Today, approximately three-quarters of the citizens of Morocco are ethnically Berber. Islam came to the country at the end of the seventh century and is the state religion. In 1904 the country was partitioned into Spanish and French areas with the French controlling most of today's kingdom. During the Second World War Morocco was occupied by the US to replace administration from Vichy, after which it returned to French rule. The country's long struggle from France ended in 1956. More than half the population of Morocco is illiterate, and approximately 20 percent live in dire poverty. Roman Catholicism came with the French and Spanish colonizers and continues to be practiced by their descendents. The largest Protestant domination in Morocco is the Evangelical Church of Morocco, which is related to the Reformed Church in France. There are no WCC member churches based in this country.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Church Council

February 18, after morning tea

Quarterly Essay Conversation

Feb 14, 1:30pm at the CTM

People to commemorate this week

Thomas Aquinas, Christian thinker

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Western Sahara, Tunisia

LECTIONARY READINGS 04 FEBRUARY 2024

Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

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