

Second Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, January 15, 2017

The Collect: Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 49:1-7 read from the Message Bible

Listen, far-flung islands, pay attention, faraway people: God put me to work from the day I was born. The moment I entered the world he named me. He gave me speech that would cut and penetrate. He kept his hand on me to protect me. He made me his straight arrow and hid me in his quiver. He said to me, "You're my dear servant, Israel, through whom I'll shine."

But I said, "I've worked for nothing. I've nothing to show for a life of hard work. Nevertheless, I'll let God have the last word. I'll let him pronounce his verdict."

"And now," God says, this God who took me in hand from the moment of birth to be his servant, To bring Jacob back home to him, to set a reunion for Israel—What an honor for me in God's eyes! That God should be my strength! He says, "But that's not a big enough job for my servant—just to recover the tribes of Jacob, merely to round up the strays of Israel. I'm setting you up as a light for the nations so that my salvation becomes global!"

God, Redeemer of Israel, The Holy of Israel, says to the despised one, kicked around by the nations, slave labor to the ruling class: "Kings will see, get to their feet—the princes, too—and then fall on their faces in homage Because of God, who has faithfully kept his word, The Holy of Israel, who has chosen you."

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 40:1-12 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 I waited patiently upon the Lord; * he stooped to me and heard my cry.

2 He lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the mire and clay; * he set my feet upon a high

cliff and made my footing sure.

3 He 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.

4 Happy are they who trust in the Lord! * they do not resort to evil spirits or turn to false gods.

5 Great things are they that you have done, O Lord my God! how great your wonders and your plans for us! * there is none who can be compared with you.

6 Oh, that I could make them known and tell them! * but they are more than I can count.

7 In sacrifice and offering you take no pleasure * (you have given me ears to hear you);

8 Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required, * and so I said, "Behold, I come.

9 In the roll of the book it is written concerning me: * 'I love to do your will, O my God; your law is deep in my heart.'"

10 I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation; * behold, I did not restrain my lips; and that, O Lord, you know.

11 Your righteousness have I not hidden in my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance; * I have not concealed your love and faithfulness from the great congregation.

12 You are the Lord; do not withhold your compassion from me; * let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever,

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 read from the Modern English Version Bible

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which has been given to you through Jesus Christ. By Him you are enriched in everything, in all speech and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift while waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by Him you were called

to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 1:29-42 read from the New American Standard Bible

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"

He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The Gospel of the Lord

The Closing Prayer: On January 21st we remember Agnes of Rome, Martyr

Agnes is a Christian martyr who died at Rome around 304 in the persecution of Diocletian: the last and fiercest of the persecutions of Christianity by the Roman emperors. Her name means "pure" in Greek and "lamb" in Latin. She is said to have been only about twelve or

thirteen when she died, and the remains preserved in St Agnes' Church in Rome are in agreement with this. It is said that her execution shocked many Romans and helped bring an end to the persecutions.

Some said, "It is contrary to Roman law to put a virgin to death. Our leaders say that it is necessary to kill Christians in order to preserve the old Roman ways: but they are themselves scorning those ways in the process."

Others said, "Do young girls constitute such a threat to Rome that it is necessary to kill them? If this religion can enable a twelve-year-old girl to meet death without fear, it is worth checking out."

There is a narrative poem by Keats, called "The Eve of Saint Agnes." It is a romantic poem with a medieval setting, about an elopement the night before St Agnes' Day. The only tie-in with Agnes is that (presumably because she died as a young virgin), Agnes is regarded as the patron of young unmarried girls, and there is a folk-belief that a girl who goes to bed supperless on the eve of St Agnes's Day will dream that night about her husband-to-be.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who choose those whom the world deems powerless to put the powerful to shame: Grant us so to cherish the memory of your youthful martyr Agnes, that we may share her pure and steadfast faith in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**