

He was “with God” (v. 1) and (with the Father and the Holy Spirit); he was God. He was the agent through whom “all things came into being” (v. 3). Through him, life (physical and spiritual) began: life given by God, “the light of all people” (v. 4). It shines in a world of unbelief and opposition to God’s ways, and wins out (v. 5).

John the Baptist came to “testify” (v. 7) to goodness, to point to Jesus (v. 8), the embodiment of perfect goodness, who was to come (v. 9). Jesus was rejected by most people (v. 11), but to those who believed in him, in who he was, he gave the opportunity to be adopted by God, as his children (v. 12) – and so to become one with him. Believers are reborn into God’s family through the Holy Spirit (“of God”, v. 13). The Word, Christ, became human (“flesh”, v. 14) and “lived among us”. The author is witness to God’s manifest power (“glory”) as seen in Jesus, that he is the only, unique, highly valued, son of the Father, that he possesses God’s attributes of free giving to humankind (“grace”) and ultimate truth.

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~ Notices ~

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

YouTube - our YouTube channel now has over 125 videos, comprising services, talks and sermons. Please do visit the channel by searching for **St Columba’s Church Ennis** and do *subscribe* if you can, we are aiming to reach 100 as soon as possible - we stand at 86 at present. Also visit our **Facebook** page:

Drumcliffe Church of Ireland Ennis

Services in the New Year - due to Covid 19 measures our churches must remain closed, however, our online services and weekday meditations continue on our website and YouTube channel..

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

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- Mission Charities -

The two charities being supported this year are below. Women’s Aid gives support and sanctuary to women and children suffering from domestic abuse - which has sadly greatly increased during the Covid 19 pandemic. Jigsaw supports young people who are struggling with their wellbeing and mental health - also a prevalent problem during so many months of lockdown and isolation.

Womens Aid

Jigsaw

www.womensaid.ie

www.jigsaw.ie

See the diocesan website for the Bishop’s address:

<http://www.limerick.anglican.org>



**Creation Sunday
(2nd before Lent) (Year B)**

Collect

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: Teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever.

Amen

Suggested Hymns - *For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.*

- 1) We have a gospel to proclaim
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-SPYAgCtkw>
- 2) Angel voices, ever singing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nig-VqlyGzA>
- 3) , In Christ there is no east or west
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpITJOSHix0>
- 4) A great and mighty wonder
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTToXUy0nChA&list=RDMToXUy0nChA&start_radio=1

Proverbs 8: 1, 22-31

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?
The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world’s first bits of soil.
When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Psalms 104: 26-37

There go the ships,
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.
These all look to you
to give them their food in due season;
when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.
May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
May my meditation be pleasing to him,

for I rejoice in the Lord.
Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Praise the Lord!

Colossians 1: 15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

John 1: 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Commentary

Proverbs 8:1-4,22-31

Wisdom, "understanding" is personified as a woman in this seven-stanza poem. Vv. 1-5 are the first stanza, and vv. 22-31 are the fifth and sixth. She "cries out" (v. 3) to all people everywhere ("all that live", v. 4). Her message is primarily to young people. She speaks "utter truth" (v. 7) – she is absolutely reliable. She is completely opposed to anything dishonest or insincere. Her message possesses integrity and makes sense, to those who understand (v. 9). Her "instruction" (v. 10) is superior to all material goods. She offers "good advice" (v. 14) and "sound wisdom" with "insight" and "strength". She guides those who rule justly (vv. 15-16). She reciprocates the love offered to her; she is found by those who "seek me diligently" (v. 17). While walking with great integrity, she brings material prosperity to all who listen to her (vv. 20-21).

Vv. 22-31 tell of her relationship to creation. God "created" (i.e. generated) her as "the first of his acts" – before he created, i.e. before "the beginning of the earth" (v. 23), before he created the "depths" (v. 24), etc. She was "brought forth": the Hebrew word presents an image of birth, as in begot or formed. Vv. 24-26 use Canaanite mythological motifs ("depths", "springs", shaping of "mountains") to say that wisdom existed before creation began. Again, v. 27 tells us that she pre-existed the world: she was present at creation, as a witness. She came to know God's secrets in creating the heavens and the earth (e.g. in limiting the extent of the sea, v. 29.) She was "beside him" (v. 30) at that time. (Later authors, those of Sirach and Wisdom, show that she had an active role in creation.) Either she was "like a master worker",

a craftsperson, in creative acts, or the Hebrew can mean little child: a notion which fits well with "brought forth" (vv. 24, 25) and with the rest of v. 30. She was God's "delight" and she delighted in his creation of humankind; she rejoiced both in God and in those created. When later trans-culturated into the Greek world, Wisdom becomes logos, the pre-existent divine Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; he "became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:1, 14).

Psalms 104:24-34,35b

This psalm is a hymn of praise to God, as creator. Earlier verses have praised him for creating the heavens and the earth, for overcoming chaos, for continuing to care for the earth and all who live in it. God's marvellous "works" (v. 24) are everywhere, all made in his wisdom. To Israelites, "the sea" (v. 25) was almost chaotic, beyond controlling, but God is so great that even "Leviathan" (v. 26), the mythical sea monster, is his harmless, sportive creature. All living things depend on God at all times, for their "food" (v. 27) and their very "breath" (v. 29, life); without it, they die. Lack of God's presence causes terror. His creative agent is his "spirit" (v. 30). Creation is continuous, continually renewed. The "glory of the Lord" (v. 31) is the magnificence of the created world, his visible manifestation. His power is evident too in earthquakes and volcanoes (v. 32). The psalmist vows to praise God throughout his life. Praise be to God!

Colossians 1:15-28

The Christians at Colossae lived in a society where many adhered to Greek cults. Vv. 15-20 are an early hymn about Christ ("He"); he is how we see (and access) God ("image"). Angelology was popular at the time; "thrones ... powers" (v. 16) were orders of angelic beings; each was "created", had its origin "in him", and exists "for him"; any power they have is subordinate to Christ's. The whole of creation – both heavenly and earthly – were created "through him", with his participation. He is also the "firstborn" (v. 18), the inheritor from the Father, of created-ness; he governs it, and is the cohesive power of the universe (v. 17). He existed "before all things", before the first creative act. Greeks saw the "head" (v. 18) as the body's source of life and growth. Christ is this to the Church, and "head" of it in the modern sense. He is "the beginning", the nucleus of the restoration of humanity to union with God, of the new created-ness. In his death ("blood of his cross", v. 20), resurrection, and ascension to the Father, he is the forerunner ("firstborn", v. 18) of our elevation to being with the Father, of our reconciliation with the Father (v. 20). Christians at Colossae tried to find ultimate power and truth in various deities, but in Christ all power and ultimate truth is present (v. 19).

Before the founding of the church at Colossae, the people there were "estranged ..." (v. 21). They are now with God, fully acceptable to him ("holy ...", v. 22), thanks to Jesus' fully human ("fleshly body") presence and death, so long as they keep to the truth of the gospel and the "hope" (v. 23) it offers (and shun Greek cults). This gospel is available to all ("to every creature"). Paul extended the reach of Christ's message; it was complete as he received it. In doing so, he suffered "afflictions" (v. 24). So "completing ... Christ's afflictions" tells of Paul's afflictions as extending Christ's – in no way was Christ's suffering incomplete. Greek cults limited knowledge of mysteries to initiates, but Christ came to make known God's "mystery" (v. 26) to all ("Gentiles", v. 27); it had been "hidden" (v. 26) in Old Testament times. Note "everyone" (three times) in v. 28.

John 1:1-14

The intent of this gospel is "that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah [the Christ], the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). John begins from God's creative act: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth ..." (Genesis 1:1), the Word, he who became a human (v. 14a), already existed.