

(as means or agent). In later chapters, Paul cautions his readers against misuse of spiritual gifts (v. 7), so in v. 5 he may be damning them with faint praise. He praises their eloquence (“speech”) and understanding (“knowledge”) but not (as in other letters) their faith, hope and love for each other and for Christ. In v. 6, “testimony” is bearing witness: God has strengthened them through their telling of the good news. They are indeed richly blessed (v. 7), but (as mentioned later), they tend to dwell on the excitement of the present rather than looking forward to “the revealing of ... Christ”, his second coming. God will help them prepare for that day, so that they may be among those judged worthy of eternal life (“blameless”, v. 8). “God is faithful” (v. 9): he will not abandon what he has begun. He has called them into “fellowship”, union with other believers which is union with Christ.

John 1:29-42 John the Baptist has denied that he is any of the figures expected by Jews to inaugurate a new era: he is neither the Messiah, Elijah, nor the prophet like Moses; rather he prepares people for the coming of the Lord. He has also told some religious authorities that one is already among them who is far more worthy than he. “The next day” John acclaim Jesus as “Lamb of God”. He is probably thinking of the fourth Servant Song: there the servant is “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter”. John recognizes that Jesus outranks him (“ranks ahead”, v. 30) and “was” (existed) before him. In vv. 31-33 he recalls his experience of Jesus’ baptism, and justifies what he has proclaimed. He says: I didn’t recognize him as Messiah (“know him”), but I now realize that I baptised with water in order that Jesus might be shown to Jews. The coming of the Spirit showed me that Jesus is the one chosen by God. I am convinced that he is, and I have told others (v. 34). (Later on, on the lips of Martha, “Son of God” and “Messiah” are synonymous.) In vv. 35-42, two of John’s disciples begin to follow Jesus. First, they are curious about Jesus when John tells them who he is. They follow him, recognizing that he is an authority (“Teacher”, v. 38). Jesus invites them to “Come and see” (v. 39), to investigate what he teaches. “Staying” and “remained” are technical terms in this gospel: the two begin to understand the way of life Jesus offers and expects. V. 40 tells us that one of the two is “Andrew”; the other is unnamed. Andrew tells “Simon” (v. 41) the good news and introduces him to Jesus. (The Greek word translated “Anointed” is Christos.) Jesus prophesies that Simon will be nicknamed “Cephas” (v. 42), the Aramaic word for rock. Petros, the Greek word for “Peter”, also means rock.

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~ Notices ~

Ukraine Appeal clareanglicans.ie or: www.christianaid.ie

Living the Questions Course – restarts in Lent

Book Club 1st (or 2nd) Tuesday of every month – please ask Sue or Carolyn (St C) or Clare (SP) for details.

Vestry membership - For those not yet on the general vestry list, please complete a form at the back of church if you would like to be part of the church’s Easter Vestry.

Meditation- St Columba’s – Every Thurs 7.30pm from Jan 19th

Lectio Divina – please let me know if you would be interested in forming a group who would meet to read and reflect upon scripture together.

Website: clareanglicans.ie

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans

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Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com

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*Upon you the Lord shines
and over you appears his
Glory!*

2nd Sunday of Epiphany (Year A) 2023

Readings and Hymns

Collect

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hymns

- 1) 166, Joy to the world, the Lord is come
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N40D2pk-w0>
- 2) 712, Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vz-FkqobgXY>
- 3) 652, Lead us heavenly Father, lead us
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpkEeXWtWg0>

Isaiah 49:1-7

Listen to me, O coastlands,
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The Lord called me before I was born,
while I was in my mother’s womb he named me.
He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
And he said to me, ‘You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’
But I said, ‘I have laboured in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the Lord,
and my reward with my God.’
And now the Lord says,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord,
and my God has become my strength - he says,
‘It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’
Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
‘Kings shall see and stand up,
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.’

Psalms 40:1-12

I waited patiently for the Lord;*
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He brought me out of the roaring pit,*
out of the mire and clay;
he set my feet upon a rock*
and made my footing sure.
He has put a new song in my mouth,*
a song of praise to our God;
many shall see and fear*
and put their trust in the Lord.
Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,*

who does not turn to the proud that follow a lie.
 Great are the wonders you have done, O Lord my God.*
 How great your designs for us!
 There is none that can be compared with you.
 If I were to proclaim them and tell of them*
 they would be more than I am able to express.
 Sacrifice and offering you do not desire*
 but my ears you have opened;
 Burnt offering and sacrifice for sin
 you have not required;*
 then said I: 'Lo, I come.
 'In the scroll of the book it is written of me*
 that I should do your will, O my God;
 I delight to do it: your law is within my heart.*'
 I have declared your righteousness
 in the great congregation;
 behold, I did not restrain my lips,*
 and that, O Lord, you know.
 Your righteousness I have not hidden in my heart;*
 I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
 I have not concealed your loving-kindness and truth*
 from the great congregation.
 Do not withhold your compassion from me, O Lord;*
 let your love and your faithfulness always preserve me..

1 Corinthians 1: 1-9

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes: To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord* and ours: 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 1: 29-42

The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.*' The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard

John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).

Post Communion Prayer

God of glory, you nourish us with bread from heaven.
 Fill us with your Holy Spirit that through us the light of your glory may shine in all the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Commentary

Isaiah 49:1-7 This is the second Servant Song. The servant speaks to Israelites scattered around the Mediterranean ("coastlands"); he identifies himself as chosen before he was born (like Jeremiah, Paul and John the Baptist) and even named (like Jesus). Further, God made him an effective instrument in proclaiming his message ("sharp sword", v. 2). Perhaps God hid him for protection or in preparation for his mission. V. 3 may tell us who the servant is: "Israel", the community of the faithful, led by the prophet. They will show God's power to others ("glorified"). But the servant retorts (v. 4): despite all our/my efforts, no one listens! Surely I minister on God's behalf and God will "reward" me for it (even if people don't). The servant's "strength" (v. 5) is from God; he is to turn "Jacob" (Israel) back to God. God (not the prophet) will gather "Israel" to him. But his mission is to all peoples, not only wayward Israelites and the faithful ("survivors", v. 6). God continues to speak to the servant, "one deeply despised" (v. 7), hated by many and "the slave of rulers": God's fidelity is his surety that all, even rulers, will hold him in awe. At the first level, in vv. 8-13 God invites the exiles to return from Babylon; this is the servant's mission ("you", v. 8). They will travel in safety ("not hunger or thirst ...", vv. 10-12) from throughout the known world. God gave them a "covenant" (v. 8) at Sinai; perhaps the servant is the new covenant – God will make a new covenant with his people. But note also "a time of favour" (v. 8) and "a day of salvation": these terms speak of the end times. God saves both now and in the era to come.

Psalms 40:1-11 This psalm may have been two psalms (vv. 1-11 and 12-17) later joined through use in a liturgy. Vv. 1-3 tell of the psalmist's experience (but not what troubled him). The "desolate pit" (v. 2) may be Sheol, the subterranean abode of the dead; perhaps he was near death, and recovered. This hymn is his "new song" (v. 3) of thanksgiving. The "proud" (v. 4) trust in themselves (not God) or in materialism. The psalmist marvels at God's innumerable "deeds" (v. 5) and "thoughts" for his people. God prefers people listening to him and doing his will over sacrificing to him (v. 6). (It was thought that God kept a "book", v. 7, a record of how ethically each person lived.) In thanks, the psalmist has told "the glad news" (v. 9) in the Temple, "the great congregation". He has not held back ("restrained") in telling of God's "faithfulness" (v. 10) to him and all God has done for him, so may God not withhold his "mercy" (v. 11), "love" and fidelity to him.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 Paul uses the schema of Greek letters of the time, expanding it to include specifically Christian notions. He is an "apostle", one sent out by Christ to perform a special mission. ("Sosthenes" may be the "official of the synagogue" beaten in Acts 18:17.) The church at Corinth is made up of ordinary people "called to be saints" (v. 2), set apart for God's work in the world, "sanctified" in baptism. Perhaps Paul reminds them that there are Christians elsewhere too. V. 3 is his greeting: he wishes them "grace" (God's freely given gift of love) and "peace" (the total state of well-being to which we are admitted through Christ): both come from the Father (as source) and the Son,