

Matthew 4:12-23

Jesus has been tempted by the devil in the wilderness. His responses show his complete dedication to the will and purpose of God. He has refused to use his divine power to his own human ends. Now he withdraws from "Nazareth" (v. 13) to "Capernaum", so he can begin his mission safe from government interference. (John the Baptist has been arrested. Sepphoris, near Nazareth, was a Roman administrative centre. If the authorities seek to arrest him, he can escape more easily from Capernaum – by boat – than from Nazareth.) Matthew is keen to show Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies: he quotes Isaiah in condensed form (vv. 15-16) to show that Jesus is the future ideal king, the Messiah. (In Isaiah, the "sea" is the Mediterranean; here it is the Sea of Galilee.)

"From that time" (v. 17) marks a milestone: the launch of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus proclaims: turn back to godly ways, to making God part of your way of thinking, for the completion of God's plan for all created beings is close! Vv. 18-22 tell of the calling of the first four disciples. (We know "Simon" as "Peter".) Jesus the teacher invites them to follow him, speaking in their terms ("fish for people", v. 19) and fulfils Jeremiah 16:16; there the Lord is "sending for many fishermen" to Israel. They give up their trade and "immediately" (v. 20) begin a radically different way of life. Jesus expects, and receives, prompt obedience. He proclaims the "good news" (v. 23) in both word and deed (healing). His ministry is to Jews, but people from "Syria" (v. 24), "the Decapolis" (v. 25, Hellenistic towns) and "beyond the Jordan" also come to him to hear his message.

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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- church room.

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com

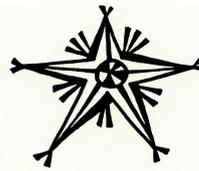
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Mission Sunday

1Donations for Protestant Aid and St Vincent de Paul to:
Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Council for Mission Bank of
Ireland, University Branch, Castletroy, Limerick IBAN:
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*Upon you the Lord shines
and over you appears his
Glory!*

3rd Sunday of Epiphany (Year A)

Readings and Hymns

Collect

Lord God, your loving kindness always goes before us and follows us. Summons us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen**

Hymns

1) 52, Christ whose Glory fills the skies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11wJOPJI-VY>

2) 438, O thou who at thy Eucharist didst pray

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4FERL8Xeno>

3) 491, We have a gospel to proclaim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5wWRYq57EM>

Isaiah 9: 1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness—

on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation,

you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you

as with joy at the harvest,

as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden,

and the bar across their shoulders,

the rod of their oppressor,

you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Psalms 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation,*
whom then shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life;*
of whom then shall I be afraid?

One thing have I asked of the Lord*
and that alone I seek:

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord*
all the days of my life,

To behold the fair beauty of the Lord*
and to seek his will in his temple.

For in the day of trouble*
he shall hide me in his shelter;

in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me*
and set me high upon a rock.

And now shall he lift up my head*
above my enemies round about me;

Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation
with great gladness;*

I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call;*

have mercy upon me and answer me.

My heart tells of your word, 'Seek my face.'*

Your face, Lord, will I seek.

Hide not your face from me,*

nor cast your servant away in displeasure.

You have been my helper;*

leave me not, neither forsake me,
O God of my salvation.

1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Matthew 4: 12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,

on the road by the sea, across the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—

the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,

and for those who sat in the region

and shadow of death

light has dawned.'

From that time Jesus began to proclaim,

'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty Father, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world. May your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Commentary

Isaiah 9:1-4

Isaiah says that a time will come ("the latter time") when God "will make glorious", show his power, to three northern regions of Israel made provinces of Assyria after the conquest of 733 BC: "the way of the sea" (Dor), "the land beyond the Jordan" (Gilead) and "Galilee" (Megiddo). (Galilee was known as multi-ethnic, "nations"). The current

"anguish" inflicted by God through the Assyrian king upon the Israelites there (the tribes of "Zebulun" and "Naphtali"), will end. The tense of the verbs is mixed perfect and future, so when the "latter time" will be is hard to tell; perhaps it is in the distant future. (In biblical times, northern Israel never regained its freedom.) As "on the day of Midian" (v. 4), when Gideon led the people of Israel to defeat a vastly superior force of Midianites with God's help, the people will be freed from oppression. ("Yoke", "bar" and "rod" are symbols of oppression.) But this conquest will be a holy war; in such a battle, none of the plunder can be kept ("shall be burned", v. 5), for it is God's. God will increase the numbers of the Israelites (multiply the nation, v. 3). They will rejoice before God ("you") as they do in times of plentiful harvest and of victory in battle ("when dividing plunder"). Vv. 6-7 are familiar to us from Christmas: "For a child has been born to us ...". Originally written to prophesy the continuance of the house of David, we also see these words as foretelling Jesus' birth.

Psalm 27:1,4-9

The psalmist expresses his confidence in God. "Light" is linked with "life". When "evildoers" (v. 2) try to destroy him ("devour my flesh"), they fail to do so. Even if they are many ("army", v. 3), he is sure that they will fail. He has asked of God that he may worship in the Temple ("live", v. 4) for as long as he lives, see the "beauty" of what God does, to know more of God; these things he intends to do. God's "tent" (v. 5) is the Temple, the psalmist's refuge; there God makes him unreachable by his ungodly foes (v. 6). So he will praise God. He pursues his request in vv. 7-12. May God allow himself to be seen (v. 9); in the past he has seemed hidden from Israel. May God care for him (v. 10). May God guide him in godly ways so that he may not become subject to the "will" (v. 12) of his foes who tell lies about him ("false witnesses", v. 12). V. 13 is the conclusion: he trusts that he will see the effects of God's caring, throughout his life. Possibly v. 14 is a later addition: God does not act according to our schedule.

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Last week we noted Paul's omission of faith, hope and love for each other as gifts of the Spirit prominent in the Christian community at Corinth. In this reading, we learn of divisions in the church there. Paul appeals for commonality in their thinking about the faith and in their vision for the church. He has heard from "Chloe's people" (v. 11), who are either members of, and slaves in, her household, or the church that meets in her home, or those who look to her as leader,

– that their factiousness has reached the level of recrimination ("quarrels"). We do not know what the three (or four) factions believed; perhaps those who "belong to Christ" (v. 12) give allegiance to him without the mediation (and the participation) of the church. ("Cephas" is Peter.) V. 13 presents three rhetorical questions, to which Paul expects a negative answer (as the Greek shows). The sarcasm is biting! (By "Christ" he means the world-wide church.) To put loyalty to a leader above fidelity to Christ is unacceptable. While Paul probably baptised the first converts in Corinth ("Crispus", v. 14, "Gaius" and "the household of Stephanas", v. 16), his prime mission is to teach the faith (v. 17). Claims of belonging to Paul are unfounded. All are baptised in the name of Christ, so all "belong" (v. 12) to him. Paul teaches straight-forwardly, relying on the message, the "power" (v. 17) of the "cross of Christ" (Jesus' sacrificial death) to convince people – not "eloquent wisdom", appealing to reason with clever arguments and rhetorical prowess. To those who hear the message and do not accept it and trust in it, it is "foolishness" (v. 18) about a man who died an ignominious death; they "are perishing" both now and when Christ comes again. But to the faithful ("to us who are being saved") it bespeaks how powerful God is.