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Second Sunday in Ordinary Time - 15 January 2023

Gerard Moore

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15 January 2023

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

It still may be a bit early in the post-Christmas summer holiday to concentrate fully, however we are allowed a glimpse of God's vision for us in the reading from Isaiah, while our texts from Paul and the evangelist John are taken from the beginning of the Letter to the Corinthians and the opening narrative of the Gospel. We are at the beginning of our annual cycle with texts that offer hope, grace and direction.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the Lamb of God. Lord have mercy.

You take away the sins of the world. Christ have mercy.

You are the Son of the Father. Lord have mercy.

Collect

The oration

Almighty ever-living God,

who govern all things,

both in heaven and on earth,

mercifully hear the pleading of your people

and bestow your peace on our times.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever.

The community invokes God in light of its faith that everything in heaven and at the same time everything on earth falls under the divine. The sense of 'govern' includes the harmony that comes from God ruling all things within their own rhythm and measure. It also carries the understanding that God's rulership is grounded in the love and fidelity that the creator has towards creation itself. It resonates with the conviction that through Christ all things were made, named as good, restored and are continually guarded. This pairing of 'heaven' and 'earth' also connotes God's use of the celestial and the earthly for the sake of salvation. From all this emerges the community's confidence that God will hear and respond with that self-same mercy.

The second petition is for peace in the present. The invocation of divine mercy sets this peace within the context of the peace that Christ has wrought. More particularly, on earth the prayer tradition links this with inner peace, freedom from sin, righteous living, and the absence of civil strife. It is a foretaste of eternal life, which itself is marked by light, truth and fellowship with the saints. This is a great prayer with which to begin the new year.

Acknowledgement

The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by Gerard Moore for the Canadian liturgical journal *Celebrate!* (Novalis Press). Our thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

The prophet Isaiah offers us a vision of the glory of God spreading light beyond our boundaries to the ends of the earth.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 40:2,4, 4-8, 8-9,10

Response

Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Paul opens his letter to the Corinthian community with companionship and the blessing of God's grace and peace.

Gospel Reading

John 1:29-34

John the Baptist recognises that Jesus is full of the Spirit, who existed before him, and whose ministry he has served.

Reflection

We will start our reflections with the first reading, a prophetic piece from the middle of the writings ascribed to Isaiah. In a way it matches the Gospel where John recognises Jesus as the one to come. There is a trace of these future Johannine themes in the passage. Jesus' pre-existence has a parallel in the sense of being 'formed' from the womb. The extent of Jesus' mission is beyond the bounds of Jacob and Israel to all the nations. The message is one of dispelling darkness and bringing light to the ends of the earth.

Our reading from Paul comprises the first lines from his Letter to the Corinthians, and as a reading about a beginning it helps us to open into the new year. It is essentially a greeting of grace and peace, and a reminder to us that every day ought to be a

greeting of grace and peace to those we meet and those we influence. We are also reminded to be living and speaking and visiting in the name of Jesus.

The passage also reminds us that Paul did not travel alone. He is with Sosthenes, who remains unknown yet named. They travel together and Paul sees this as so central that he opens the letter referencing his companion.

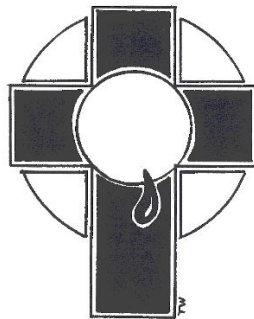
The Gospel of John is full of surprises. We forget how individual an approach the 'fourth' Gospel takes to the revelation of Jesus the Christ. This scene with John the baptiser is no different and has features that point to themes that will recur across the Gospel.

The Baptist, known as John, does not actually baptise Jesus. Rather, as a prophet he recognises him and points his own followers to him. This is a significant action of the prophet, as the text makes clear that he has no prior knowledge of Jesus, yet on seeing him approach dissolves his own ministry as no longer needed. The Baptist also acts here as a witness: Jesus is already fitted out for ministry and so baptism is redundant. In fact, he is the pre-existent one, and to encounter him is to encounter the divine. By contrast John is a transitional figure, whose work is completed with the manifestation of Jesus.

The theme of witness occurs across the Gospel. Aligned with this is the theme of testimony. The dynamic of the court room is a recurring one, with the language of witness, testimony, judge.

What John recognises is the presence of the Spirit. Again, this is a theme that will run across the whole of the text. Jesus is the bringer of the Spirit, his ministry is filled with the Spirit, those who follow are led by the Spirit.

So, in a way the gospel invites us to begin the year with the pre-existent yet present Jesus, filled with the Spirit, recognised by the prophet, underpinned by witness and testimony. And our response is like that of John, to let go and to allow the presence of Christ to emerge.



*There is the Lamb
of God who takes
away the sin of
the world.* Jn 1:29

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

We have been called by Christ, the Lamb of God, to be servants of God and to serve each other. Mindful of this calling, let us ask God to hear our needs as we pray.

Petitions

For Pope Francis, for our Bishops and clergy, for all lay and religious leaders in the Church, that they live their lives knowing that they are called to be witnesses to the world of Christ's presence among us.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

For our national leaders and those who work for peace and justice to make a better world, that they show leadership in the reconstruction of lives and economies in countries affected by war, natural disasters and civil unrest.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

For unity among all Christians in seeking God's will and harmony among all people, that we may strive to respect each other's gifts while working as servants of God's Kingdom particularly as we move as a synodal people towards the Synod on Synodality.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

For our parish community, called in Baptism to proclaim God's praise, that each one of us may grow more Christ-centred, seeking a deeper relationship with God and reaching out to others with missionary zeal.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

For the spiritual and physical well-being of all parishioners, that they may show the presence of God to all those they meet in their domestic world, places of learning, or places of work.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who have died or are bereaved. May our community continue to reach out in generous support to those who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God, you who revealed your Son as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, listen to our prayers so that we may reflect your salvation to the ends of the earth.

We pray this prayer through the power of the Spirit and in the name Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVNG	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1	S&S2
Alleluia, sing to Jesus	191			371	619	449		
All people that on earth do dwell	25			533	613	448		
All the ends of the earth	76			420				
All you nations, sing out your joy					616	347		
Be thou my vision	9				733	455		
Christ, be our light		3		404		540	105	
Christ is the world's light					643	467		
Church of God				480	652	471		
Come down, O love divine	118			375	653	381		
Forth in the peace of Christ we go				495	681	489		
Here am I, Lord								255
Here I am			63					
Here I am, Lord	90			496		518		
In Christ there is no east or west					721	519		
Lord, whose love in humble service					741	551		
Love divine, all loves excelling				463	740	552		
Now let us from this table rise					753	560		
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry					780	244		
Praise the One who breaks the darkness						584		
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour	28			407		587		
The Church's one foundation				484	819	614		
The voice of God				476	835	621		
Thus says the Lord of hosts						629		

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 39: *Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.*

	CWB	JOBA	LPA
Psalm 39	352	pg. 54	pg. 80

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing out with joy (FWS) *based on Ps 65 (66)* [Gathering,]

Hearts on fire (SHOF) [Gathering, Recessional]

Holy Spirit, come (TCS)

Holy Spirit of fire (SHOF, CWBII)