

Sunday, September 12, 2021

Lectionary 24, Year B

Introduction

Three weeks ago we heard Peter's confession of faith as told in John's gospel. This week we hear Mark's version, when Peter says, "You are the Messiah." In John, the stumbling block is Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh, given for the life of the world. In Mark too the scandal has to do with Jesus' words about his own coming death, and here Peter himself stumbles over Jesus' words. But Jesus is anointed (the meaning of *messiah*) in Mark only on the way to the cross (14:3); so we are anointed in baptism with the sign of the cross.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
whose teaching is life,
whose presence is sure,
and whose love is endless.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter:

like lost sheep, we have gone astray.

We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.

We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression.

We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.

Free us from our sin, gracious God.

Listen when we call out to you for help.

Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Amen.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

By the gift of grace in ✠ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous.

Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, through suffering and rejection you bring forth our salvation, and by the glory of the cross you transform our lives. Grant that for the sake of the gospel we may turn from the lure of evil, take up our cross, and follow your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous,* in order to bring you to God. *Alleluia.* (1 Pet. 3:18)

Readings and Psalm

[Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)

The servant is vindicated by God

[Psalm 116:1-9](#)

I will walk in the presence of the LORD. (Ps. 116:9)

[James 3:1-12](#)

Dangers of the unbridled tongue

[Mark 8:27-38](#)

Peter's confession of faith

Semicontinuous First Reading and Psalm

[Proverbs 1:20-33](#)

Wisdom's rebuke to the foolish

[Psalm 19](#)

The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul. (Ps. 19:7)

[Wisdom 7:26--8:1](#) (alternate)

God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom. (Ws. 7:28)

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

The image of the servant of the Lord is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today's reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God's steadfast love.

- ⁴The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.
- ⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
- ⁶I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.
- ⁷The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;

therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
⁸he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
^{9a}It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-9

I will walk in the presence of the LORD. (Ps. 116:9)

¹I love the LORD, who has ¹heard my voice,
and listened to my ¹supplication,
²**for the LORD has given ¹ear to me
whenever ¹er I called.**
³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave ¹came upon me;
I came to ¹grief and sorrow.
⁴**Then I called upon the name ¹of the LORD:
“O LORD, I pray you, ¹save my life.” R**
⁵Gracious is the ¹LORD and righteous;
our God is full ¹of compassion.
⁶**The LORD watches o- ¹ver the innocent;
I was brought low, ¹and God saved me.**
⁷Turn again to your rest, ¹O my soul.
for the LORD has dealt ¹well with you.
⁸**For you have rescued my ¹life from death,
my eyes from tears, and my ¹feet from stumbling;**
⁹I will walk in the presence ¹of the LORD
in the land ¹of the living. **R**

Second Reading: James 3:1-12

This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed

among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Gospel: Mark 8:27-38

This story provides the turning point in Mark's gospel. Peter is the first human being in the narrative to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but he cannot accept that as the Messiah Jesus will have to suffer. Moreover, Jesus issues a strong challenge to all by connecting discipleship and the cross.

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Semicontinuous First Reading: Proverbs 1:20-33

In these verses Wisdom is personified as a woman who invites all who will listen to follow her. Though Wisdom offers her hand to those who scoff at her, they spurn all such counsel. That they come to ruin is predictable. Those who find Wisdom, however, find life.

²⁰Wisdom cries out in the street;
in the squares she raises her voice.

²¹At the busiest corner she cries out;
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

²²“How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing

and fools hate knowledge?
²³Give heed to my reproof;
 I will pour out my thoughts to you;
 I will make my words known to you.
²⁴Because I have called and you refused,
 have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,
²⁵and because you have ignored all my counsel
 and would have none of my reproof,
²⁶I also will laugh at your calamity;
 I will mock when panic strikes you,
²⁷when panic strikes you like a storm,
 and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
 when distress and anguish come upon you.
²⁸Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
 they will seek me diligently, but will not find me.
²⁹Because they hated knowledge
 and did not choose the fear of the LORD,
³⁰would have none of my counsel,
 and despised all my reproof,
³¹therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way
 and be sated with their own devices.
³²For waywardness kills the simple,
 and the complacency of fools destroys them;
³³but those who listen to me will be secure
 and will live at ease, without dread of disaster.”

Semicontinuous Psalm: Psalm 19

The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul. (Ps. 19:7)

¹The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,
 and the sky proclaims its | maker’s handiwork.
²**One day tells its tale | to another,
 and one night imparts knowledge | to another.**
³Although they have no | words or language,
 and their voices | are not heard,
⁴**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends | of the world,
 where God has pitched a tent | for the sun.**
⁵It comes forth like a bridegroom out | of his chamber;
 it rejoices like a champion to | run its course.
⁶**It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of | it
 again;**
nothing is hidden from its | burning heat. R
⁷The teaching of the LORD is perfect and re- | vives the soul;
 the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to | the simple.
⁸**The statutes of the LORD are just and re- | joice the heart;
 the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light | to the eyes.**

⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and en- | dures forever;
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous | altogether.
¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold, more than | much fine gold,
sweeter far than honey, than honey | in the comb. R**
¹¹By them also is your ser- | vant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is | great reward.
¹²**Who can detect one's | own offenses?
Cleanse me from my | secret faults.**
¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion | over me;
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a | great offense.
¹⁴**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in your sight,
O LORD, my strength and | my redeemer. R**

Semicontinuous Psalm (alternate): Wisdom 7:26--8:1

God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom. (Ws. 7:28)

²⁶Wisdom is a reflection of e- | ternal light,
a spotless mirror of the working of God, an image | of God's goodness.
²⁷**Although she is but one, she can | do all things,
and while remaining in herself, she re- | news all things;**
in every generation she passes into | holy souls
and makes them friends of | God, and prophets;
²⁸**for God loves noth- | ing so much
as the person who | lives with wisdom. R**
²⁹She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation | of the stars.
Compared with the light she is found to | be superior,
³⁰**for it is succeeded | by the night,
but against wisdom evil does | not prevail.**
^{8:1}She reaches mightily from one end of the earth | to the other,
and she orders | all things well. **R**

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Revealing God, you have made yourself known through bread and wine, water and word.
Continue to nurture your church, that it is a place where your presence is experienced and shared.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Creating God, you brought life into being and called it good. Bring new creation to lands devastated by tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, and other disasters (*recent destructive events may be named here*). Restore forests and curb overflowing waters. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Protecting God, you desire all people to live in peace and safety. Provide for all who are in danger. Strengthen first responders to help meet to the complex needs of others. Provide care and compassion as they face trauma themselves. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Transforming God, you announce release to the captives and freedom to the oppressed. Break chains of discrimination and injustice. Amplify voices that go unheard and inspire us to advocate for the those who are overlooked. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Forming God, you gather this community together. Shape our communal life, that in our prayer, praise, and worship, we honor you and encourage one another. Keep our disagreements civil and increase our joy in working together. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Redeeming God, you accompany your people through every stage of life. We give you thanks for the saints who now rest in your embrace (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

God of abundance,
you cause streams to break forth in the desert
and manna to rain from the heavens.

Accept the gifts you have first given us.
Unite them with the offering of our lives
to nourish the world you love so dearly;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Invitation to Communion

All who hunger and thirst, come.
The table is ready.

Prayer after Communion

Lord of life,
in the gift of your body and blood
you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation.
Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy,
bearing witness to the abundance of your love
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

People of God,
you are Christ's body,
bringing new life to a suffering world.

The holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

Thanks be to God.

Upcoming Commemorations

Peter Claver, priest, missionary to Colombia, died 1654

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Born into Spanish nobility, Claver became a Jesuit missionary, and served in present-day Colombia. His ministry was focused on the slaves that arrived there. He gave them food and medicine, learned their dialects, and taught them Christianity.

John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, died 407

Monday, September 13, 2021

John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname "Chrysostom" ("golden mouth"). Appointed bishop of Constantinople, seat of the empire, he criticized corruption in the court. As a result, he was exiled by the empress.

Holy Cross Day

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Helena, mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and found what may be the actual site of Jesus' crucifixion. Her son built two churches there, and the dedication of one of them gave rise to this celebration of our Lord's victory on the cross.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258

Thursday, September 16, 2021

Cyprian served as a bishop during a time of great persecution of Christians. He insisted on receiving back those who had left the faith under duress. He also provided medical care during a severe epidemic.

Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179

Friday, September 17, 2021

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She was also a musician and artist.

Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, died 1961

Saturday, September 18, 2021

A Swedish diplomat, Hammarskjöld served as the second Secretary General of the United Nations until his death in a plane crash while trying to negotiate peace in present-day Zambia. His journal, published as *Markings*, revealed the depth of his Christian faith.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS000406.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.