

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John appears as his witness. He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me ranks before me because he existed before me.'

Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received – yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Second Sunday After Christmas Yr B **3rd January 2021**

Light for Today



There is a sentence in our Second Reading today which sums up the theme of this, the Sunday bridging Christmas and the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord: “*May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him.*” Paul, writing to the Ephesians, prays that the people may understand and grasp the tremendous gift that the Father has bestowed on them in His Son Jesus Christ. This is very much my prayer for each one of you in 2021. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, may you come to know the Lord Jesus and the Father, whom he reveals.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, splendour of faithful souls, graciously be pleased to fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all peoples by the radiance of your light.

Ecclesiasticus 24: 1-2, 8-12

Wisdom speaks her own praises, in the midst of her people she glories in herself. She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High, she glories in herself in the presence of the Mighty One; 'Then the creator of all things instructed me, and he who created me fixed a place for my tent. He said, "Pitch your tent in Jacob, make Israel your inheritance." From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall remain. I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle, and thus was I established on Zion. In the beloved city he has given me rest, and in Jerusalem I wield my authority. I have taken root in a privileged people, in the Lord's property, in his inheritance.'

The first reading from Ecclesiasticus was written by the scribe Ben Sirach around 200 B.C. In today's passage he reflects on wisdom. This isn't human wisdom (intelligence, understanding, insight, etc.) Instead he sees wisdom as a reflection of God. As Christians, especially in the light of today's Gospel, we might replace the word 'Wisdom', with 'Christ' or 'Word of God'.



Psalm 147:12-15,19-20

*O praise the Lord, Jerusalem! Zion, praise your God!
He has strengthened the bars of your gates he has blessed the
children within you.*

He established peace on your borders, he feeds you with finest wheat.

He sends out his word to the earth and swiftly runs his command.

He makes his word known to Jacob, to Israel his laws and decrees.

*He has not dealt thus with other nations; he has not taught
them his decrees.*

Ephesians 1: 3-6, 15-18

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence, determining that we should become his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ for his own kind purposes, to make us praise the glory of his grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved.

That will explain why I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love that you show towards all the saints, have never failed to remember you in my prayers and to thank God for you. May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit.

Today's opening paragraph from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians is considered to be a prayer of praise from an ancient liturgy. The Father is praised for his love revealed in Christ Jesus. Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ, that we might become his adopted sons & daughters. As we read this passage today, let us make this prayer of thanksgiving our own.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Glory be to you, O Christ, proclaimed to the pagans.

Glory be to you, O Christ, believed in by the world. Alleluia!

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings we make on the Nativity of your Only Begotten Son, for by it you show us the way of truth and promise the life of the heavenly Kingdom.

Prayer after Communion

Lord our God, we humbly ask you, that, through the working of this mystery, our offences may be cleansed and our just desires fulfilled.