

The Third Sunday of Epiphany

*Sunday between 21 and 27 January inclusive ·
Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Principal Service readings

Isaiah 9.1-4 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light
Psalm 27.1,4-12 [or 27.1-11] The Lord is my light and my salvation
1 Corinthians 1.10-18 Disagreements among the faithful
Matthew 4.12-23 Jesus preaches repentance and calls his first disciples

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

The proclamation of Jesus and the calling of disciples

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles –
¹⁶the 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.'

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

¹⁸As 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. ¹⁹And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As 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.
²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³Jesus 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.

Matthew 4.12-23 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

Jesus chooses the marginal area of Galilee (4.12), an area despised by the Jews from the capital and by the system. This province in the north-east is a mixture in terms of religion and so viewed as suspect by those invested in cultic purity. Matthew quotes Isaiah's words (Isaiah 8.23-9.2-3) calling it 'Galilee of the nations' (or 'the pagans'). Perhaps we can see here a foretaste of Jesus' final commissioning to make disciples of all nations (28.19).

The kingdom is near and the people are asked to repent (4.17), that is to welcome the reign of God.

Jesus calls ordinary people, in this case fishermen (4.18), to share in his mission of proclaiming the good news. They do not yet know what this task will involve and yet they commit themselves to it.

The works of Jesus show that he brings not only good news in words but the practice of healing (4.23).

Quotations

1

God has entrusted us with his most precious treasure - people. He asks us to shepherd and mold them into strong disciples, with brave faith and good character.

John Ortberg, 1957–

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

2

May it please Christ our Lord to grant us true humility and abnegation of will and judgement, so that we may deserve to begin to be his disciples.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, 1491–1556

Related topics

For further study:

Kingdom of God; evangelisation; Christian witness; Christian unity; conversion; discipleship; Christology

Closing Prayer

God of salvation,
the splendour of your glory
dispels the darkness of earth,
for in Christ we behold
the nearness of your kingdom.

Now make us quick to follow where he beckons,
eager to embrace the tasks of the gospel.

We ask this 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.

Opening prayers · Ordinary Time, Week 3²

CPL • LBC Year A Epiphany 3.odt • 2022-10-31

² *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.*