

Our Service Together

January 19th 2025

An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia, Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world. alleluia!

Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. **Amen.**

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.
Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalmody 36.5-10

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens and your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness stands like the strong mountains, your justice like the great deep;
you, Lord, shall save both man and beast.
How precious is your loving mercy, O God!
All mortal flesh shall take refuge under the shadow of your wings.
They shall be satisfied with the abundance of your house; they shall drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the well of life and in your light shall we see light.
O continue your loving-kindness to those who know you and your righteousness to those who are true of heart.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen

Scripture Reading Isaiah 62.1-5

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.
²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.
³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴You
shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My
Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married.
⁵For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you
for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel John 2.1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his
disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him,
'They have no wine.' ⁴And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you or to me? My hour has not
yet come.' ⁵His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' ⁶Now standing there were six stone
water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, 'Fill the
jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the
chief steward.' So they took it. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know
where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the
bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests
have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana
of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

'What concern is that to you or to me?', Jesus says to his mother when she brings him the concerns over the wine running out at the wedding. What follows, John tells us is the first sign of Jesus' glory; but I wonder, is it?

For the careful reader there are maybe eight signs of Jesus' glory to find in John's gospel, with the resurrection being the last. This 'first' one takes place on the 'third day' of the wedding and does point us to a greater fulfilment and glory. But the full 'glory' of Jesus is revealed in the crucifixion – three days before the resurrection. At Cana, Jesus takes the Jewish purification waters and turns them into wine, so too at Calvary he takes the festival of Passover and transforms it into the great revelation of God-in-action, a revelation indeed of His full glory - in love! The best of everything is kept until this time; all look on in wonder as the true Bridegroom is revealed, confounding custom and expectations, enabling both a wedding feast in Cana and also the feast of redemption at the end of time itself.

But, I wonder is this water into wine really the first sign of God's glory revealed in Jesus? For certain this is a wondrous, miraculous action which leaves all able to worship God on high in wonder and praise. John says it is, but I wonder if something more profound and glorious is already told to us earlier in the gospel.

'What concern is that to you or to me?' Such sentiments we find across the gospels; it is even uttered by disciples themselves; 'why are you bothering the master with this matter – this little concern?' Mary's response to Jesus is great, but oh to have seen the look she must have given him also. Might the words and her look have suggested something like this to Jesus, 'get on with what you are here, in this world for'. You do after all have the sense that this is the starting point of Jesus ministry. John highlights Jesus' place and purpose to us in this little incident, but he has referred to it in the chapter before already when he talks of the Word made flesh now 'pitched' and dwelling within humanity.

Is this not the first sign, God with us in every aspect of human life? This dwelling amongst us, this making his home with us, this being 'as one with our humanity' is surely the first sign. It certainly must be the spectacles to look through, the filter to apply as we read the rest of the gospel – God, high above, holy and spirit is now also 'below', having 'pitched' his life amongst us in an earthy, fleshy Adam existence.

As 'one with us' there is nothing that is not of concern to Jesus, and his mother reminds him of this!

I suspect we might well think some matters are not of concern to God incarnate; or we may have been told so – shooed away like the children were by the Apostles. Well, such thinking is nonsense!

In asking the question 'What concern is that to you or to me' Jesus opens the door for Mary to remind all of us that there is nothing too small or trivial, nothing too ordinary in the world that it is not a concern for God in Christ. The 'word' that created all things is dwelling as 'one with us', amongst us, the resurrection is the last sign indeed of Jesus' glory, for he gathers us up into the presence of God – as Paul says in his letter to the Romans 'there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord'!

God is not going away, Jesus in all his glory is with us until the end of the age! Might we be encouraged here and, as His adopted children 'come to him' without listening to those who would discourage us, and bring to him all and everything in prayer and in worship!

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers *We make our intercessions*

We pray for the church and all God's people. We pray especially for all whose faith is being tested and all who may be approaching Jesus for the first time.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for the King, for our politicians and all in public office that, through God's grace they may lead us with compassion, remain sensitive to the needs of others and be free from false judgement and condemnation.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray that God will remind us about what is important and what is not, and will help us to overcome our own temptation. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for all who suffer through the sin of others: all victims of abuse, oppression or neglect; we pray for all who need God's help. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy name thou will grant their requests: fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen

The Collect

All: Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen.