

Sunday Message

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 15 January 2023 • Psalter Week 2

JOHN'S WITNESS

(JOHN 1:29-34)



Statue of St John the Baptist, on Charles Bridge, Prague

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist adopts the role of witness on behalf of Jesus. He points toward Jesus and offers powerful evidence of why he is convinced Jesus is the Messiah. He wants to persuade anyone who will listen that Jesus is indeed the one they have been waiting for, the one they should follow.

First, he says that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This language is probably inspired by the language of sacrifice in the Temple. Two lambs were sacrificed in the Temple in Jerusalem each day, one in the morning and one in the evening. Individuals also offered a lamb in sacrifice if they needed to perform a rite to regain their ritual purity on certain occasions. The most important offering of a lamb took place at Passover. Then the animal's blood was used to mark the house while the flesh was eaten at the Passover meal. The Gospel writer draws many parallels between the death of Jesus and the paschal lamb. Jesus dies close to evening time when the lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple. The soldiers do not break the bones of his legs to hasten death: it was forbidden to break any of the bones of the paschal lamb while it was being prepared. Instead, the soldier pierces his side causing blood and water to flow out. St Paul also calls Jesus the Passover lamb that has been sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The second important thing John the Baptist says about Jesus is that it was revealed to him that this young man from Galilee was the one about whom he was preaching, even though he did not know him beforehand. Jesus is indeed the long-awaited Messiah.

The third thing he says about Jesus is that he will baptise, not with water, but with the Holy Spirit. This means that Jesus will plunge us into the depths of God's life just as surely as John plunged those who came looking for baptism into the waters of the Jordan. Plunging a person into the depths of God is not merely something on the outside. It opens them to a new depth of relationship with God, to receive God's own life. Later in John's Gospel, Jesus will express that in simple language when he says that he came that we might have life and have it to the full (John 10:10).

As Christians, we also are called to point to Jesus, to offer evidence on his behalf. We do this not only by what we say but also by the kind of people we are. ■

PRAY

This is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Traditionally, it runs from 18-25 January. Give thanks to God for the many beliefs Christians from the mainstream churches hold in common. Pray for deeper unity between all Christians.



REFLECT

Last year, one of the most talked-about media and social media events was the court showdown between actors Johnny Depp and Amber Heard. It was broadcast live on American court TV, and its proceedings were followed assiduously by millions.

At the same time, on this side of the Atlantic, one of the biggest media and social media events was the London libel trial featuring football WAGs Coleen Rooney and Rebekah Vardy.

It's no surprise that these confrontations were such major media events, because both involved celebrities and courtroom dramas. Most of us love anything to do with courts and courtrooms. From Judge Judy to Atticus Finch to *12 Angry Men* to anything by John Grisham, we love legal dramas.

Today's Gospel has strong echoes of a legal drama, with John the Baptist playing the role of chief witness for Jesus. He points to Jesus and identifies who Jesus is: the Lamb of God, the Chosen One of God. He witnesses to Jesus publicly and on the record.

We probably won't be called upon to witness to Jesus in a court of law (hopefully, we'll never have to appear in a court of law), but we are called to witness to Jesus as Christians. We are called to testify on his behalf. We do so by the kind of people we are, the values we hold, and the concrete actions we take every single day. ■

SAY

"Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us."

DO

Be a witness for Christ this week. Speak to someone about what your faith means to you.

LEARN

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist describes Jesus as the Chosen One of God. Each one of us is a chosen one of God. God has created and shaped us in God's image and likeness. We are special in God's eyes.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

All the earth shall bow down before you,
O God,
and shall sing to you,
shall sing to your name, O Most High!

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

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.

COLLECT

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.
Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
The Lord said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel,
in whom I shall be glorified";
I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord,
my God was my strength.
And now the Lord has spoken,
he who formed me in the womb to be his
servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
to gather Israel to him:
"It is not enough for you to be my servant,
to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back
the survivors of Israel;
I will make you the light of the nations
so that my salvation may reach to the ends
of the earth."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 39

Response:
Here I am, Lord!
I come to do your will.

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry.
He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God. (R.)

- 2. You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,
but an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.
Instead, here am I. (R.)
- 3. In the scroll of the book it stands written
that I should do your will.
My God, I delight in your law
in the depth of my heart. (R.)
- 4. Your justice I have proclaimed
in the great assembly.
My lips I have not sealed;
you know it, O Lord. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle,
together with brother Sosthenes, send
greetings to the church of God in Corinth,
to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are
called to take their place among all the saints
everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus
Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours.
May God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ send you grace and peace.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessings on the King who comes,
in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest heavens!
Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 1:29-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John
said, "Look, there is the lamb of God that
takes away the sin of the world. This is the
one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming
after me who ranks before me because
he existed before me. I did not know him
myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel
that I came baptising with water." John also
declared, "I saw the Spirit coming down on
him from heaven like a dove and resting on
him. I did not know him myself, but he who
sent me to baptise with water had said to me,
'The man on whom you see the Spirit come
down and rest is the one who is going to
baptise with the Holy Spirit.' Yes, I have seen
and I am the witness that he is the Chosen
One of God."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that we may participate worthily in these
mysteries,
for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is
celebrated
the work of our redemption is accomplished.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have prepared a table before me,
and how precious is the chalice that
quenches my thirst.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Pour on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love,
and in your kindness
make those you have nourished
by this one heavenly Bread
one in mind and heart.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Truly a faithful friend is the medicine of life.
Truly a faithful friend is a strong defence.
For what will not a genuine friend perform?
What pleasure will he not afford? What
benefit? What security? Though you should
name infinite treasures, none of them is
comparable to a genuine friend.

St John Chrysostom