



Celebrate

Sunday, September 12, 2021
16th Sunday after Pentecost

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 (14:5); so we are anointed in baptism with the sign of the cross.

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.

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.

The 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.
The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
I 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.
⁹It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

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.

Not 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

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.

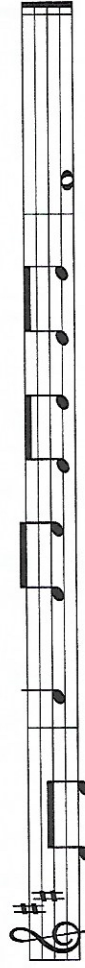
Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁵And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁶He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ²⁷And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

²⁸Then 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. ²⁹He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³⁰But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said,

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.

"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."



I will walk in the presence of the LORD.

¹I love the LORD, who has heard my voice,
and listened to my supplication,

²for the LORD has given ear to me
whenever I called.

³The cords of death entangled me;
the anguish of the grave came upon me;
I came to grief and sorrow.

⁴Then I called upon the name of the LORD:

“O LORD, I pray you, save my life.” **R**

⁵Gracious is the LORD and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

⁶The LORD watches over the innocent;
I was brought low, and God saved me.

⁷Turn again to your rest, O my soul,
for the LORD has dealt well with you.

⁸For you have rescued my life from death,
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling;

⁹I will walk in the presence of the LORD
in the land of the living. **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.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, 407) Psalm 119:169-176. **Tuesday** (Holy Cross Day) John 3:13-17. **Wednesday** John 7:25-36. **Thursday** (commemoration of Cyrian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, 258) Psalm 54. **Friday** (commemoration of Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, 1179) Romans 11:25-32. **Saturday** (commemoration of Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, 1961) 2 Kings 17:5-18. **17th Sunday after Pentecost** Jeremiah 11:18-20 or Wisdom 1:16—2:1, 12-22; Psalm 54; James 3:13—4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37.

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