

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right;
treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

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

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption,
look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters,
that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom
and an everlasting inheritance.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Say to all faint hearts,
"Courage! Do not be afraid.

"Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;

for water gushes in the desert,
streams in the wasteland,
the scorched earth becomes a lake,
the parched land springs of water.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 145

Response:

My soul, give praise to the Lord.

or
Alleluia!

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free. (R.)

2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed down,
the Lord who loves the just,
the Lord, who protects the stranger. (R.)

3. The Lord upholds the widow and orphan,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age. (R.)

SECOND READING

James 2:1-5

A reading from the letter of St James.

My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, "Come this way to the best seats;" then you tell the poor man, "Stand over there" or "You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest." Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:

you have the message of eternal life.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 7:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. "He has done all things well," they said "he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

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

O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace,
graciously grant that, through this offering,
we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty
and, by partaking of the sacred mystery,
we may be faithfully united in mind and heart.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Like the deer that yearns for running
streams,
so my soul is yearning for you, my God;
my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant that your faithful, O Lord,
whom you nourish and endow with life
through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament,
may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts
that we may merit an eternal share in his life.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

9 SEPTEMBER 2018

Sunday Message

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • Season colour: Green • Psalter Week 3



Christ healing Peter's mother-in-law: mosaic in Cora Church, Istanbul

Jesus is in Gentile territory, preaching and healing. This shows that his message is not confined to a Jewish territory or audience, but has a universal meaning.

Jesus' works of healing illustrate God's Kingdom breaking into those situations where human life is imperilled or impaired. Mark the evangelist presents him as healing different kinds of people with different kinds of ailments, and here we have a very vivid presentation of the restoring to full health of someone who had no power of speech or hearing. Such healing is spoken of by the prophet Isaiah as a sign of the coming of the Lord. But the healing stories are symbolic of Jesus' ability to meet the deepest needs of the human person, and not just curing some physical sickness or condition out of compassion for the particular individual. They are what we might call 'catechetical aids' rather than episodes from a biography of Jesus.

We often read in Mark's account that Jesus forbids the person who is healed, or those who witness what happened, to talk about the event. It may well be that it is possible for people to come to the correct conclusion that Jesus is the Son of God or the Messiah for the wrong reasons. The miracles are not the definitive evidence of Jesus' true identity; that is given on the cross, when there can be no further misunderstanding. The true confession of Jesus as the Son of God is given by the Gentile centurion when Jesus is dead.

Mark often ends a section with the question, "Who is this...?" When this occurs we might take the question as addressed to ourselves and wonder how we might answer; we are as much involved in the story as the characters in the narrative. ■

REFLECT

Mark's presentation of Jesus' mission to the Gentiles reflects the experience of the evangelist's own community. It is also a model for the disciples who are called to take the Gospel message beyond the boundaries of their own comfort zone – in more than one sense. It is easy to settle for the comfortable and familiar (the maintenance model of the church) and to forget that the Gospel message is for everyone, including those of different outlook and culture (the mission model).

There is a feeling in certain quarters that if the church were to find a better way of communicating its message, then the problem would be solved. While there is some truth in that, very often people are not so much attracted by abstract reasoning so much as by the faith of individual Christians whom they encounter in the course of their daily life and business. Such people have something about them which make others wonder and want what they have. But this quality is not something which can be manufactured; it is something within the person and comes from a deep conviction about who Jesus is and what Jesus means to them. Very often it is not something which the individual can put into words, but it is still real and effective. That is why the Gospel urges us to keep asking the question of ourselves: "Who is this...?" ■

SAY

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind.

DO

Prepare your answer to someone who asks you, "Why are you a Christian?" or "Why do you go to church?" Be ready to give it.



Umm Qais in the ancient city of Decapolis, present-day northern Jordan. It is located in the extreme north-west of the country, where the borders of Jordan, Israel and Syria meet.

LEARN

The term *Decapolis* means 'Ten Cities'.

The Decapolis region is located in southern Syria and is Gentile territory.

The theme running through Mark's Gospel of Jesus not allowing people to speak about his miracles or identity is known as the 'Messianic Secret'.

Ephphatha is a Hebrew or Aramaic term. Aramaic was the common language of the people of the region in Jesus' day.