



First Sunday of Advent

3 December 2017

Sentence 'Heaven and earth will pass away,' says the Lord, 'but my words will not pass away.' *Mark 13.31*

Collect

God of unveiled truth, faithful flame
in times of darkened sun and waning moon:
lift up our unknowing hearts, and waken our sleeping love
to announce the coming dawn of unexpected peace;
through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

This portion of Isaiah was added after the return from exile in Babylon when life was hard as Jerusalem's walls and Temple were rebuilt. The people are reminded that God alone is sovereign over the nations including the Jewish peoples; here the prophet calls on people to live trusting this truth. Note the beautiful image of God as a potter who fashions us in love as we place our lives in God's hands.

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.

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

An earlier letter, now lost, precedes this one in which Paul begins by greeting the Church and urging them to look to Jesus and his present and yet still coming fulfilment of God's plans.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1.1-9

Reader May your word live in us
ALL And bear much fruit to your glory.

Gospel Acclamation

ALL Praise and honour to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, show us your mercy and love
and grant us your salvation.

Praise and honour to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader The Lord be with you
ALL And also with you

You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity for ever.
Now consider, we are all your people. *Isaiah 64.1-9*

Reader Hear the word of the Lord
ALL **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19 at 8am APBA page 307 at 10am 42

This psalm is a prayer for deliverance and calls upon God to shine forth as the shepherd of a scattered people. It draws on imagery of Israel as a vine God took from Egypt and planted in a new land and which now requires restoring after plunder and ruin. Chosen for Advent Sunday, the psalm fits the focus on waiting for God's appearing.

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to St Mark

ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we begin a new liturgical year (Yr B) and the reading of Mark's gospel. Jesus urges us to be alert to God's coming in decisive action for the redemption of the world. Christians believe that action has begun (and is completed) in Jesus, though we have yet to experience its fullness.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake'. *Mk 13.24-37*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Bible Readings next week Advent 2 Yr B 10 December

Isaiah 40.1-11 Psalm 85.1-2, 8-13 2 Peter 3.8-15a Mark 1.1-8

Prayer for the Week Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came among us in great humility, that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Pray for the Faithful Departed. We remember before God: Cathleen Ann Balla, Florence Richards, Nicholas Andrew, Colin Lachlan McInnes, Peter Reid and Maurice Street *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

Commemorations of the week.

December 4 Nicholas Ferrar (1592-1637). Born in London, he had a brilliant academic career and later in business and politics. In 1625, he abandoned these and, with others, formed a community with a life of prayer and good works at the village of Little Gidding. He was denounced by the Puritans and his works burnt. TS Eliot wrote a poem about the community.

December 6 Nicholas of Myra (Asia Minor). Bishop and teacher. Little is known of him. He is the Patron Saint of sailors (and churches in his name were built on landmarks) of children ('Santa Claus is an American corruption of 'Saint Nicholas') and of

Russia.

December 8 The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is one the days when the Church celebrates the faith of Mary, the mother of the Lord. It was feast day retained by the English reformers and is yet another way of remembering that Jesus was born of a human mother and thus the Word took flesh to dwell among us.

December 8 Richard Baxter (1615-1691). Puritan divine and spiritual writer. He wrote over 200 works.