

Sunday, December 27, 2020

First Sunday of Christmas, Year B

Introduction

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Prayer of the Day

P Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Isaiah 61:10--62:3

10I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

62:1For 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.

Luke 2:22-40

22When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), 24and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
30for my eyes have seen your salvation,
31which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
32a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

33And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

36There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Christmas Conversation

Prayers of Intercession

P Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

A All creation is holy to you, O God. You cause the earth to bring forth its shoots and gardens to spring up. Protect hibernating animals and frozen lands that wait earnestly for longer days of awakening and growth. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Night and day, all creation praises you, O God. Strengthen your church across nations, denominations, and traditions. Inspire military chaplains as they care for those who are far from home. Fill us with wisdom and unify our proclamation of your forgiveness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A The nations are upheld by your hand, O God. Cause righteousness and praise to spring forth, inspiring leaders to serve with compassion and integrity. Send your spirit of discernment upon legislators grappling with complex decisions for the sake of the common good. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Send the spirit of your Son into our hearts, O God. Come quickly to hearts that race with fear, hearts that break with grief, and hearts that long for wholeness (especially). Reveal your power to heal and to save. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Adopt us into your family, O God. Bless our elders with the peace and joy of Simeon and Anna. Strengthen those who have retired, those who work in older age, and those in need of income, food, company, or health care. Connect young and old across generations. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Let us depart in peace, O God, according to your word. For (John, apostle and evangelist, and) all your saints, we give you thanks. Prepare our salvation in the sight of all your witnesses of every time and place. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

P God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

C **Amen.**

Offering Prayer

A Gracious God,
you came to us as one unknown,
bringing joy and salvation to the earth.
Nourish us at your banquet table,
that with all who welcome your birth
we may proclaim your peace,
revealed in Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

C **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

A We give you thanks, gracious God,
that you have once again fed us from your very self
with the body and blood of Christ.
Through this mystery, send us forth
to proclaim your promise to a world in need,
through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C **Amen.**

Blessing

P Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless you this day ✠ through the Word made flesh.

C **Amen.**

Dismissal

A Go in peace.
Share the gift of Jesus.

C **Thanks be to God.**