

05 February 2023 - Third Sunday before Lent

The Collect

Almighty God,
who alone can bring order
to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity:
give your people grace
so to love what you command
and to desire what you promise,
that, among the many changes of this world,
our hearts may surely there be fixed
where true joys are to be found;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading

Isaiah 58.1-9a

Thus says the Lord:

Shout out, do not hold back!
Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.
Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgements,
they delight to draw near to God.
'Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day,
and oppress all your workers.
Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.
Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?
Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rearguard.
Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 2.1-12(13-16)

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come
proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For
I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him

crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much
trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible
words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of
power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on
the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a
wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to
perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God
decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age
understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the
Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,

what God has prepared for those who love him' –

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit
searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being
knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So
also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of
God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit
that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on
us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by
human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things
to those who are spiritual.

Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for
they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand
them because they are discerned spiritually. Those who are spiritual
discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's
scrutiny.

'For who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?'

But we have the mind of Christ.

Gospel

Matthew 5.13-20

Jesus went up the mountain and was joined by his disciples. Then he
began to teach them: 'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has
lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good
for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.
No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on
the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way,
let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good
works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I
have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until
heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a
letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore,
whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and
teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of
heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called
great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your
righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will
never enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father,
who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life,
that those who come to him should never hunger:
draw us to the Lord in faith and love,
that we may eat and drink with him
at his table in the kingdom,
where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.