

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY, 20 February 2022 – 2 before LENT

COLLECT

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,
now and for ever.

Psalm 65

- 1 Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; ♦
to you that answer prayer shall vows be paid.
- 2 To you shall all flesh come to confess their sins; ♦
when our misdeeds prevail against us, you will purge them away.
- 3 Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there. ♦
We shall be satisfied with the blessings of your house, even of your holy temple.
- 4 With wonders you will answer us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, ♦
O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.
- 5 In your strength you set fast the mountains ♦
and are girded about with might.
- 6 You still the raging of the seas, ♦
the roaring of their waves and the clamour of the peoples.
- 7 Those who dwell at the ends of the earth tremble at your marvels; ♦
the gates of the morning and evening sing your praise.
- 8 You visit the earth and water it; ♦
you make it very plenteous.
- 9 The river of God is full of water; ♦
you prepare grain for your people, for so you provide for the earth.
- 10 You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; ♦
you soften the ground with showers and bless its increase.
- 11 You crown the year with your goodness, ♦
and your paths overflow with plenty.
- 12 May the pastures of the wilderness flow with goodness ♦
and the hills be girded with joy.
- 13 May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep ♦
and the valleys stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing.

The Revelation to John, Chapter 4

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.' ²At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! ³And the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. ⁴Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; ⁶and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. ⁸And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.'

⁹And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

¹¹ 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'

The Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 8, vv 22-25

²² One day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So they put out, ²³and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A gale swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. ²⁴They went to him and woke him up, shouting, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'

Reflection from Peter

On Christmas Day, just a few weeks ago, the James Webb telescope was launched into space. It is the successor to the now famous Hubble telescope that has been sending back extraordinary images from space. But this new telescope is going even further, to the very edge of space, to look at the beginning of the universe and, we hope, to send us back pictures that will tell us of the first moments of creation.

Such a lot has happened in a short time. We remember those first, amazing pictures of the earth seen from space and now we are looking back to the very beginning of time. Such a mystery, such a wonder.

In today's Gospel we see something very similar. Jesus, the young teacher and prophet from Nazareth, is out with his friends on a boat on the lake. While he is asleep, a storm blows up and the boat is in danger of sinking. His friends wake him and, the Gospel tells us, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves and there was a calm. But this is Jesus, not just a prophet and teacher but the Son, the Word of God, through whom all things were made. This is Jesus who was there at the beginning of time; Jesus, who, with the Father and the Spirit, created the world and all that is in it. As the country is again battered by storms, electricity cut off and travel disrupted, today is a good day for reminding us that God is not like a teddy bear to cuddle rather desperately while the storm rages, but the source and power that made and keeps everything; the God who knows and loves everything and everyone that is, and draws everything in love to Godself, including you and me. As this truth sweeps over us, we join with the living creatures of the vision of John and sing,

“You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.”