

Sunday 28 December – First Sunday of Christmas

Collect

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD,
the deeds for which he is to be praised,
according to all the LORD has done for us –
yes, the many good things he has done
for the house of Israel,
according to his compassion and many kindnesses.
He said, “Surely they are my people,
sons who will not be false to me”;
and so he became their Saviour.
In all their distress he too was distressed,
and the angel of his presence saved them.
In his love and mercy he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them
all the days of old.

Psalm 148

Alleluia.

Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.

Praise him, all you his angels; ♦
praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon; ♦
praise him, all you stars of light.

Praise him, heaven of heavens, ♦
and you waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord; ♦
for he commanded and they were created.

He made them fast for ever and ever; ♦
he gave them a law which shall not pass away. **R**

Praise the Lord from the earth, ♦
you sea monsters and all deeps;

Fire and hail, snow and mist, ♦
tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;

Mountains and all hills, ♦
fruit trees and all cedars;

Wild beasts and all cattle, ♦
creeping things and birds on the wing;

Kings of the earth and all peoples, ♦
princes and all rulers of the world;

Young men and women,
old and young together; ♦
let them praise the name of the Lord.

For his name only is exalted, ♦
his splendour above earth and heaven.

He has raised up the horn of his people
and praise for all his faithful servants, ♦
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Alleluia.

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says,

“I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.”

And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again he says,

“Here am I, and the children God has given me.”

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

When the Magi had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

When Herod realised that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had

learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

“A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.”