

# Sunday Readings

## 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024

### Collect

Grant us, Lord our God,  
that we may honour you with all our mind,  
and love everyone in truth of heart.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

### FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Moses said to the people: 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves, from your own brothers; to him you must listen. This is what you yourselves asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly. "Do not let me hear again" you said "the voice of the Lord my God, nor look any longer on this great fire, or I shall die"; and the Lord said to me, "All they have spoken is well said. I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him. The man who does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name, shall be held answerable to me for it. But the prophet who presumes to say in my name a thing I have not commanded him to say, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die."'

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### Responsorial Psalm

*Psalm 94:1-2,6-9 R/. v.9*

**R/. O that today you would listen to his voice!  
'Harden not your hearts.'**

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;  
hail the rock who saves us.  
Let us come before him, giving thanks,  
with songs let us hail the Lord. **R/.**  
Come in; let us bow and bend low;  
let us kneel before the God who made us:  
for he is our God and we  
the people who belong to his pasture,  
the flock that is led by his hand. **R/.**

O that today you would listen to his voice!  
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
as on that day at Massah in the desert  
when your fathers put me to the test;  
when they tried me, though they saw my work.'  
**R/.**

### SECOND READING

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

7:32-35

I would like to see you free from all worry. An unmarried man can devote himself to the Lord's affairs, all he need worry about is pleasing the Lord; but a married man has to bother about the world's affairs and devote himself to pleasing his wife: he is torn two ways. In the same way an unmarried woman, like a young girl, can devote herself to the Lord's affairs; all she need worry about is being holy in body and spirit. The married woman, on the other hand, has to worry about the world's affairs and devote herself to pleasing her husband. I say this only to help you, not to put a halter round your necks, but simply to make sure that everything is as it should be, and that you give your undivided attention to the Lord.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### Gospel Acclamation

Mt 11:25

*Alleluia, alleluia!  
Blessed are you, Father,  
Lord of heaven and earth,  
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom  
to mere children.  
Alleluia!*

### GOSPEL

Mark 1:21-28

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.  
*Glory to you, O Lord.*

Jesus and his followers went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the sabbath came he went to the synagogue and began to teach. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit and it shouted, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.' But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is new' they said 'and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.' And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

# The Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year B

The Word of God

Saints of the Week

Saturday 3 February 2024

## St Laurence of Canterbury (- 619)

He was one of the original missionaries who came from Rome with St Augustine in 597. He succeeded Augustine as Archbishop of Canterbury in about 604. He died at Canterbury on 3 February 619.

## St Dunstan of Canterbury (- 988)



His career began at Glastonbury, where he became abbot in 945. In 960 he became Archbishop of Canterbury, where he remained until his death on 19 May 988. He worked hard for the spiritual and temporal well-being of his people, restoring churches, judging lawsuits, defending the weak and friendless, reforming

institutions and even promoting the draining of parts of the Somerset Levels so that they could be used for agriculture. In folklore he figures in many duels with the Devil, which he wins by ingenuity as much as by holiness.

## St Theodore of Canterbury (602 - 690)

He was born in Tarsus in about 602. In 667 he was living in Rome, still a layman, when the Pope chose him to be Archbishop of Canterbury. He was ordained priest, consecrated as Archbishop, and arrived in Canterbury in May 669. The English Church at this time was troubled and divided, and he travelled round the country filling vacant bishoprics and promoting peace and unity. He died at Canterbury on 19 September 690.

## Prayer of the Week

### A Prayer of St Thomas Aquinas Feast Day - 28 January

Grant me, O Lord my God,  
a mind to know you,  
a heart to seek you,  
wisdom to find you,  
conduct pleasing to you,  
faithful perseverance in waiting for you,  
and a hope of finally embracing you.  
Amen.



Today's Gospel continues our reading from Mark and describes what some believe was likely to have been a typical day in Jesus' ministry. Jesus and the disciples that chose to follow him in last week's Gospel arrive at Capernaum, a small village on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Mark reports that the people respond to Jesus' teaching with astonishment, noting Jesus' authority and contrasting it with the scribes'. Early in Mark's Gospel we already find evidence of the tension that will manifest itself fully in Jerusalem.

After Jesus' preaching, an even more astonishing thing happens. A man possessed with an unclean spirit calls out to Jesus. As we see in this example and throughout Mark's Gospel, the spirits and demons seem to know Jesus and are often fearful of him. In fact, they seem to understand Jesus' identity better than his disciples. As we will read again and again in Mark's Gospel, Jesus orders the spirit to be quiet and drives the unclean spirit out of the man. Jesus' ability to heal those possessed by demons is an indication of his power over evil.

In the prescientific age of Jesus' time, all illnesses were understood to be manifestations of evil and sinfulness. Our modern understanding of illness is very different. Possession by unclean spirits may have been a way to describe what we might call mental illness today. It may have even been a way of describing certain kinds of physical conditions. There is evidence that there were many kinds of exorcists and healers in first-century Palestine. Jesus appears to be like these healers, but he heals with unique authority and connects his healing activities with the words of his preaching.

We are missing the point that Mark is trying to make in this Gospel, however, if we try to explain away the healing work of Jesus. The crowds see in Jesus' cure of the possessed man further affirmation of his authority. Jesus' power to heal gives greater credence to his teaching. Jesus impresses the crowds through his words, which are manifested with power in his deeds. Mark's Gospel tells us that because of the authority with which he healed, Jesus' fame spread throughout all of Galilee.