

READINGS FOR EPIPHANY 4 2023

Collect

Righteous God,
you confound the world's wisdom
by giving your blessing to the lowly and pure in heart:
give us such a hunger and thirst for justice
and perseverance in striving for peace,
that in our words and deeds
the world may see the promise of your kingdom,
which has been revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First reading

Micah 6.1-8

- ¹ Hear what the Lord says:
Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.
- ² Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the Lord has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.
- ³ 'O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!
- ⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.
- ⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord .'
- ⁶ 'With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,
with calves a year old?
7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalm

Psalm 15

1 Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle:
or who may dwell upon your holy hill?
2 Whoever leads an uncorrupt life
and does the thing which is right:
who speaks the truth from the heart,
and has not slandered with the tongue;
3 Who has done no evil to a friend:
nor vented abuse against a neighbour;
4 In whose eyes the worthless have no honour:
but who makes much of those that fear the Lord;
5 Whoever has sworn to a neighbour:
and will not go back on that oath;
6 Who has not put money to usury:
nor taken a bribe against the innocent.
7 Whoever does these things:
shall never be overthrown.

Second reading

1 Corinthians 1.18-31

18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
19 For it is written,
'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.

²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom,

²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are,

²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

³⁰ He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

³¹ in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

Gospel

Matthew 5.1-12

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: ³ 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶ 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷ 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will

receive mercy. ⁸ 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹ 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ¹⁰ 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.