

Sunday 4 February 2024 – Second Sunday before Lent

The 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.
Amen.

First Reading: Proverbs 8:1, 22-31

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?
The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth –
when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Psalm 104:26-37

O Lord, how manifold are your works! *
In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

There is the sea, spread far and wide, *
and there move creatures beyond number, both small and great.

There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan *
which you have made to play in the deep.

All of these look to you *
to give them their food in due season.

When you give it them, they gather it; *
you open your hand and they are filled with good.

When you hide your face they are troubled; *
when you take away their breath, they die and return again to the dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created, *
and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; *
may the Lord rejoice in his works;

He looks on the earth and it trembles; *
he touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; *
I will make music to my God while I have my being.

So shall my song please him*
while I rejoice in the Lord.

Let sinners be consumed out of the earth and the wicked be no more. *
Bless the Lord, O my soul. Alleluia.

Second Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

¹⁵Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Gospel: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.