

Daily Office Devotional, Tuesday, January 6, 2021
The Feast of the Epiphany
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings

AM Psalm 46, 97; PM Psalm 96, 100

Isa. 52:7-10; Rev. 21:22-27; Matt. 12:14-21

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, Book of Common Prayer

Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, Book of Common Prayer

Compline (Night Prayer), Page 127, Book of Common Prayer

The Daily Office Gospel, Matthew 12:14-21

12:14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him. 15 When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, 16 and he ordered them not to make him known. 17 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 18 'Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. 19 He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. 20 He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. 21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope.'

David's Reflections

Carl Sandburg, the North Carolina native and poet, once wrote about Jesus this way:

"Jesus had a way of talking soft and outside of a few bankers and higher-ups among the con men of Jerusalem everybody liked to have this Jesus around because he never made any fake passes and everything he said went and he helped the sick and gave the people hope.

"This Jesus was good to look at, smelled good, listened good. He threw out something fresh and beautiful from the skin of his body and the touch of his hands wherever he passed along." *

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany--Jesus' public manifestation to Israel after his birth. At the heart of the focus in Epiphany

are events like the coming of the Magi, Jesus' baptism, his public preaching, his first miracle in Cana of Galilee (John 2).

Today's Daily Office says something about the nature of Jesus' public appearing and ministry. The religious leaders were plotting against his life; Jesus withdrew, possibly to defuse the conflict. Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-4 at this point (the only Gospel to do so), a text about the Suffering Servant. That text emphasizes one of the Servant's qualities, gentle, nonoppressive strength.

Unlike a new monarch, the Servant would not send heralds into the streets announcing his policies and decrees. "He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will his voice be heard in the streets." Also, unlike a monarch, the Servant would not exercise power in a way that crushes the weak or oppresses the powerless. "He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick."

Jesus would not wrangle with the Pharisees in a combative fashion. He would proclaim justice and live into that proclamation and trust the power of the kingly rule of God. He would continue his own humble, gentle ministry in such a way that salvation would extend to Israel and even beyond to the Gentiles.

Carl Sandburg's lines capture something of the essence of this text. On a personal level, how will Jesus respond to the places in our lives that are like a bruised reed and a smoking wick, the places of powerlessness and brokenness? How will he respond to our errant viewpoints and to those places where we are resistant to his call? With this text to enlighten our expectations, we can expect Jesus to respond with gentleness, an unrelenting gentleness that will not leave us as we are but will not crush or intimidate us into a response.

In his name we persevere in hope.

[Carl Sandburg, from "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," in *Chicago Poems*]

Collect of the Second Sunday after Christmas Day

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen. (BCP, 214)

Today we celebrate The Feast of the Epiphany. For additional information on this feast day, see the web link:

<http://elvis.rowan.edu/~kilroy/JEK/home.html> or *Lesser Feasts and Fasts: 2003*, p. 116.

Collect of the Feast of the Epiphany

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the Peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 214; *LFF: 2003*, p. 117)

A Collect for Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 99)

Of the Departed

Eternal Lord God, you hold all souls in life: Give to your whole Church in paradise and on earth your light and your peace; and grant that we, following the good examples of those who have served you here and are now at rest, may at the last enter with them into your unending joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 253)

In the Evening

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. *Amen.* (BCP, 833)

A Collect for Mission

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.* (BCP, 100)