

# Readings + 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany, Lect. 5 B + February 4, 2024

## Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

## First Reading Isaiah 40:21-31

- <sup>21</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- <sup>22</sup> It is God who sits above the circle of the earth,  
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to live in;
- <sup>23</sup> who brings the great to naught,  
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
- <sup>24</sup> Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,  
when God blows upon them, and they wither,  
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.
- <sup>25</sup> To whom then will you compare me,  
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
- <sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
Who created these?  
The One who brings out their host and  
numbers them,  
calling them all by name;  
because God is great in strength,  
mighty in power,  
not one is missing.
- <sup>27</sup> Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and speak, O Israel,  
“My way is hidden from the LORD,  
and my right is disregarded by my God?”
- <sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
The LORD does not faint or grow weary;  
the understanding of God is unsearchable.
- <sup>29</sup> The LORD gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.
- <sup>30</sup> Even youths will faint and be weary,

and the young will fall exhausted;  
<sup>31</sup> but those who wait for the LORD shall renew  
their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

## Psalmody Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our  
God! How pleasant it is to honor God with  
praise!

**The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem, and gathers  
the exiles of Israel.**

The LORD heals the brokenhearted and binds up  
their wounds.

**The LORD counts the number of the stars and  
calls them all by their names.**

Great is our LORD and mighty in power; there is  
no limit to God’s wisdom.

**The LORD lifts up the lowly, but casts the  
wicked to the ground.**

Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make music  
upon the harp to our God,

**who covers the heavens with clouds and  
prepares rain for the earth, making grass to  
grow upon the mountains.**

God provides food for the cattle and for the  
young ravens when they cry.

**God is not impressed by the might of a horse,  
and has no pleasure in the speed of a  
runner,**

but finds pleasure in those who fear the LORD, in  
those who await God’s steadfast love.

Hallelujah!

## Second Reading 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

*Paul writes:* <sup>16</sup> If I proclaim the gospel, this  
gives me no ground for boasting, for an obli-  
gation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not  
proclaim the gospel! <sup>17</sup> For if I do this of my own  
will, I have a wage; but if not of my own will, I  
am entrusted with a commission. <sup>18</sup> What then is  
my wage? Just this: that in my proclamation I may  
make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make  
full use of my rights in the gospel.

<sup>19</sup> For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain all the more. <sup>20</sup> To the Jewish people I became as a Jew, in order to gain the Jewish people. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might gain those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not outside God's law but am within Christ's law) so that I might gain those outside the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, so that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. <sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I might become a partner in it.

## **Holy Gospel** Mark 1:29-39

*All three synoptic Gospels include parts of this section; only Mark and Luke have all of it. A couple notable pieces: Only Luke and Mark tell of Jesus' time of prayer. Mark and Luke also only tell of Jesus' refusing to let demons speak, because they knew him. (Think of last week's Gospel.) Mark's thread of Jesus' power over the demons concludes with his mentioning it at the end of this whole section (verse 39.) Both Matthew and Luke cut that line out of their conclusion.*

<sup>29</sup> As soon as *Jesus and the disciples* left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup> Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup> Jesus came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup> That evening, at sunset, they brought to Jesus all who were sick or possessed with demons. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered around the door. <sup>34</sup> And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

<sup>35</sup> In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and his companions hunted for him. <sup>37</sup> When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup> Jesus answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." <sup>39</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.