

We Respond

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) O Sing a new song to the Lord! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, Strength and honour in his holy place.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 26)

ANTIPHON: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

LECTOR: The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; before whom shall I shrink? **R.**

LECTOR: There is one thing I ask of the Lord, for this I long, to live in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to savour the sweetness of the Lord, to behold his temple. **R.**

LECTOR: I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Hope in him, hold firm and take heart. Hope in the Lord! **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

Or

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 8:23 – 9:3; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17; Matthew 4:12-23

NEXT WEEK (4th Sunday of Year A) Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13; Psalm 145; 1 Cor 1:26-31; Matt 5:1-12

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People who found the light



22 January 2023 3rd Sunday Year A

Galilee was no one's idea of a place that could launch a 'world changing movement'. Galilee's history was not glorious. The readings today refer to it as the "land of Naphtali", which was one of the breakaway tribes of the Jewish people that formed the northern kingdom of Israel.

According to the Old Testament, these tribes did not remain faithful to God, committing idolatry and gross injustices. The northern kingdom was later invaded and its people taken captive by the Assyrian empire. The area around the Sea of Galilee remained largely deserted for centuries.

By the time of Jesus, Galilee had been repopulated by Jewish people who had formed several prosperous towns and villages. Although its population was fervently Jewish, their countrymen in Judea and around Jerusalem regarded Galileans as barely qualifying as Jewish, with their blended ethnic heritage and stereotypes about them being lax in religious practice.

They had identifiable accents and would have been regarded by Judeans as their less-sophisticated country cousins. Throughout the Gospels the Judeans repeatedly dismiss Jesus and his disciples when they learn they are from Galilee.

These are people today's readings describe as "people who walked in darkness", and with history the Scriptures depict as 'degraded by God'. But it is to the people of Galilee, "on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death, light has arisen."

Jesus' ministry in Galilee is a fitting example of how God ministers first to the lowly and humble and chooses them to do wonderful things for him. The people of Galilee are the first to hear the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Their people are chosen to be disciples of Israel's promised Messiah and messengers of God to the ends of the earth. And it is to the Galileans that Jesus first travels "teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people."

Today's gospel brings us hope for our own land, currently assailed by secularism and our own history of injustices. Our country could also be a spark for God's plan of salvation for the entire world. What we learn is that God is looking to bring the kingdom of heaven to people who have the humility and willingness to follow him.

If the kingdom of heaven is to come through us, then it must start with the two messages that Jesus' preaches in the gospel: "Repent" and "Come after me." Jesus calls the people of Galilee, and us today, to leave the darkness of our past sins behind us and follow him, the one true light.

May we all pray that we, a people who walk in darkness, see the true light of Christ and become "fishers of men" for him to the ends of the earth. May every corner of our country know Jesus' teachings, his healing and his love for people.

Joseph Doyle

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