

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany Sunday, January 28, 2018

The Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 read from the New Living Translation Bible

Moses continued, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. For this is what you yourselves requested of the Lord your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai. You said, ‘Don’t let us hear the voice of the Lord our God anymore or see this blazing fire, for we will die.’

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘What they have said is right. I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf. But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die.’

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 111 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, * in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

2 Great are the deeds of the Lord! * they are studied by all who delight in them.

3 His work is full of majesty and splendor, * and his righteousness endures for ever.

4 He makes his marvelous works to be remembered; * the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

5 He gives food to those who fear him; * he is ever mindful of his covenant.

6 He has shown his people the power of his works * in giving them the lands of the nations.

7 The works of his hands are faithfulness and justice; * all his commandments are sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, * because they are done in truth and equity.

9 He sent redemption to his people; he commanded his covenant for ever; * holy and awesome is his Name.

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; * those who act accordingly have a good understanding; his praise endures for ever.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.”

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.

Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. “Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Mark 1:21-28 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible Anglicised

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.'

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On January 31st we celebrate the life of John Bosco Priest. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

John Bosco was born on August 16th, 1815, near Turin, Italy. His father died when he was two, leaving his mother to provide marginal subsistence for the family. He showed a remarkably sweet and kind disposition, which put him at odds with many of the boys with whom he grew up. When he was nine, he received a vision: Christ and the Blessed Virgin encouraged him to be kind, obedient, and hard-working and told him that, in doing so, a great future would be shown him. Bosco always counted this as the beginning of his vocation.

Bosco was fascinated by the traveling circuses which visited his region and went about learning to juggle, walk a tightrope, and do magic tricks. He put on local "shows," which drew both children and adults. The "price" of admission to these exhibitions was time spent at the end of the show saying prayers together. With help from some patrons who recognized his intelligence and talent, he attended seminary, and, after ordination, he obtained an appointment as chaplain to a girls boarding school. Because of his teaching ministry, he was accorded the title "Don."

Bosco was not satisfied ministering only to well-to-do young women. In time, every Sunday and feast day the campus filled up with local boys who came for catechism, basic schooling, and supervised play. The raucous energy of the boys scandalized the school and Don Bosco was fired. In 1846 he was able to open an orphanage and put the new work under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales. With the help of an assistant priest and some seminarians he had groomed from among his boys, he formed the Salesian Order. This order, grudgingly admired by secular politicians, was recognized by the Pope and grew to include women religious, lay brothers and dedicated laity, operating orphanages, vocational schools, and nighttime primary schools for working people.

Don Bosco summed up his theory of education: "Every education teaches a philosophy by suggestion, implication, and atmosphere. Every part has a connection with every other part. If it does not combine to convey some general view of life, it is not education at all."

Don Bosco died in Turin on January 31st, 1888.

Let us pray: Loving God, who tenderly cares for children and orphans: Fill us with love like that shown forth in the witness of John Bosco, that we may give ourselves completely to your service and to the salvation of all; through your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**