Sunday 21st of January 2024 – Plough Sunday / 3rd of Epiphany

Special Prayer for the day
Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

First Reading
Psalm 128

[1] Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!
[2] You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.
[3] Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
[4] Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.
[5] The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!
[6] May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel! (ESV)

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Second Reading
Isaiah 55:6–11

[6] "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;
[7] let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
[8] For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
[9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
[10] "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
[11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (ESV)

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading
Mark 4:2–8
Mark 4:26–29
Mark 4:30–32
Hear the gospel of our Lord according to John
Glory to you or Lord.

[2] And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: [3] "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. [5] Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. [6] And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. [7] Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. [8] And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." (ESV)

[26] And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. [27] He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows;

he knows not how. [28] The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. [29] But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (ESV)

[30] And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? [31] It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, [32] yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." (ESV)

This is the gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Final Prayer
Almighty Father,
whose Son our Saviour
Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
may your people,
illumined by your word and sacraments,
shine with the radiance of his glory,
that he may be known,
worshipped, and obeyed
to the ends of the earth;
for he is alive and reigns,
now and for ever.
Amen.

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