

Sunday, January 31, 2021 – The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

## ***The Collect***

The Lord be with you.

*And also with you.*

Let us pray.

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.*

*First Reading:*

***A Reading from the Book of Deuteronomy***

Moses said: The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.” Then the LORD replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.”

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.*

## Psalm 111

<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah!

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, \*  
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

<sup>2</sup> Great are the deeds of the LORD! \*

they are studied by all who delight in them.

<sup>3</sup> His work is full of majesty and splendor, \*  
and his righteousness endures for ever.

<sup>4</sup> He makes his marvelous works to be remembered; \*  
the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.

<sup>5</sup> He gives food to those who fear him; \*  
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

<sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the power of his works \*  
in giving them the lands of the nations.

<sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faithfulness and justice; \*  
all his commandments are sure.

<sup>8</sup> They stand fast for ever and ever, \*  
because they are done in truth and equity.

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

<sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; \*  
those who act accordingly have a good understanding;  
his praise endures for ever.

*Second Reading:*

***A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians***

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.

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.*