

Epiphany 3A
January 22, 2023



Isaiah 9:1-4

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23

Vincent of Saragossa
(Late 4th Cent. AD)



Deacon & Martyr

St. John's Episcopal Church, Centreville VA

Adult Lectionary Forum 2023

The earliest account of **Vincent's** martyrdom is in a carmen (lyric poem) written by the poet Prudentius, who wrote a series of lyric poems, *Peristephanon* (*Crowns of Martyrdom*), on Hispanic and Roman martyrs. He was born at Huesca, near Saragossa, Spain sometime during the latter part of the 3rd century; it is believed his father was Eutricius (Euthicius), and his mother was Enola, a native of Osca (Huesca). Vincent spent most of his life in Saragossa, where he was educated and ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Valerius, who commissioned Vincent to preach throughout the diocese. Valerius suffered from a speech impediment, so Vincent acted as his spokesman. When Emperor Diocletian began persecuting Christians in Spain, both men were brought before Roman governor Dacian, in Valencia and were confined to the prison there. Though he was finally offered release if he would consign Scripture to the fire, Vincent refused. Speaking on behalf of his bishop, he informed the judge that they were ready to suffer everything for their faith, and that they could pay no heed either to threats or promises. His outspoken manner so angered the governor that he had every sort of torture inflicted on Vincent. He was stretched on the rack & his flesh torn with iron hooks. Then his wounds were rubbed with salt & he was burned alive upon a red-hot gridiron. Finally, he was cast into prison & laid on a floor scattered with broken pottery, where he died. During his martyrdom he preserved such peace and tranquility that it astonished his jailer, who repented from his sins & was converted. Vincent's dead body was thrown into the sea in a sack but was later recovered by supporters. His veneration immediately spread throughout the church. The aged bishop Valerius was merely exiled. According to legend, after being martyred, ravens protected Vincent's body from being devoured by vultures, until his followers could recover the body. His body was taken to what is now known as Cape St. Vincent; a shrine was erected over his grave, which continues to be guarded by flocks of ravens to this day.

St. Vincent of Saragossa



Collect for Epiphany 3A

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Prayer for Epiphany 3A [St. Vincent of Saragossa]

Almighty God, whose deacon Vincent, upheld by you, was not terrified by threats nor overcome by torments: Strengthen us to endure all adversity with invincible and steadfast faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who
**WALKED IN
DARKNESS**

have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a
land of deep darkness,

on them has
**LIGHT
SHINED.** 
Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

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EPHANY 3A: I SEE A GREAT LIGHT [ISAIAH 9:1-4]

We'll See a Great Light—Really!

- Text addresses a people in despair who lack the light
- V1: Transitions between a prophecy of impending judgment in Isaiah 8:16-22 & the psalm of thanksgiving in 9:2-7
- Vv 1-2: Acknowledges a "former time" of deep darkness in Zebulun, Naphtali, the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, & Galilee of the nations
- These geographical designations are west of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee), from which Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III, conquered and deported its citizens to Assyria in 732 BC
- To destitute people Isaiah announces a coming age when night will transform to day
- Moreover, Israel need not despair since those same people who walked in darkness will experience a great light
- Throughout Isaiah, particularly Chs 40-55, the prophet associates YHWH's salvic work with "new" or "latter" things in contrast to "former things."
- Light isn't a given; day isn't obligated to dawn. It is because of divine action that a great light appears, the nation is multiplied, harvests are fruitful, and victory is achieved.
- Vv 3-4: Describe how light reverses the hunger, depopulation, and military defeat incurred in the darkness.

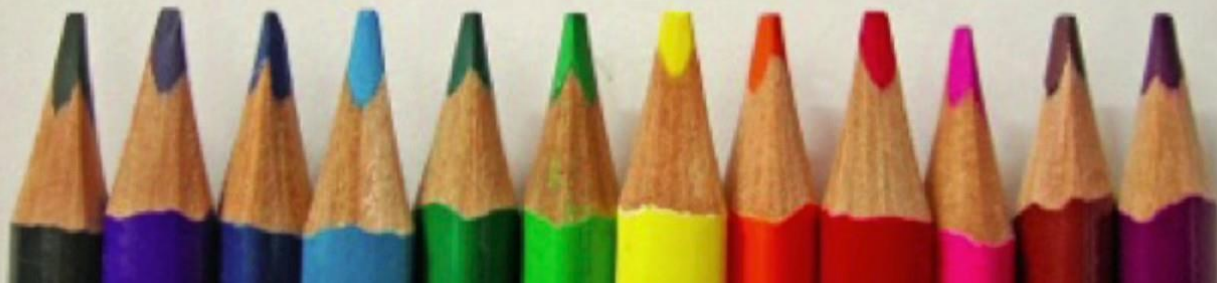


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Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."

United in Mind.
United in Purpose.
United.

1 Corinthians 1:10-18



Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

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EPHAPHANY 3A: CHURCH DIVIDED [1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-18]

- The church to which Paul writes more likely numbered in the dozens than in the hundreds.
- Despite their size, leadership styles are just one of the ways they have found to divide themselves: worship practices, sexual ethics, social and economic class, spiritual gifts, and education level (or "knowledge") all appear in the letter as divisions
- V10: Paul urges they be of "the same mind and purpose"
- Corinthians do not understand the cross of Christ was God's way of upending their ways of defining & valuing themselves & one another.
- Chief concern: the Church's ongoing allegiance to a wisdom Paul says is trumped by God's work in Christ.
- Paul's choice to address baptism at the start of a letter principally dealing with divisions in one of his churches is not random.
- He mentions baptism because the unity he seeks for the church comes from their shared connection, through baptism, to the one who was crucified and through him, to one another.
- Unity of mind/purpose isn't because a particular leader creates consensus, or all possess spiritual knowledge, but it is born from a baptism that connects all of us to Christ's death & resurrection.



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When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ...From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."



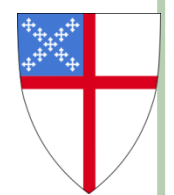
As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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A New Dawn

- Jesus' "withdrawal" into Galilee, is less a retreat & more a journey into the lion's den. The Galilean ruler, Herod Antipas, was the one who had John arrested.
- John's arrest foreshadows Jesus' own.
- Kafir Nahum (Capernaum), where Jesus made his home, boasted a mere 1,000 souls who relied on farming and fishing to survive.
- While Jesus has already been named "Son of God," he lives not among the rich and powerful, but among the common people on the NW shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- Region had historically belonged to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, but by the 1st century it truly was "Galilee of the Gentiles," conquered by Rome and ruled by a Roman puppet whom few Jews regarded as authentically Jewish.
- Jesus' message is identical to John's: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" but the context is different.
- John prepared the way. Jesus is the embodiment of the message.
- In Jesus' preaching & ministry, a new light has dawned indeed, and the reign of God has arrived.
- Are you coming with us?**

EPHAPHANY 3A: REPENT & FOLLOW ME! [MATTHEW 4:12-23]



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