

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Begin

Saturday 16th December 2023



Thomas Cole, The Pilgrim of the Cross at the End of His Journey (study for series, The Cross and the World), ca. 1846-1848, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum

Scripture: Matthew 17:9-13

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, ‘Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.’ And the disciples asked him, ‘Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ He replied, ‘Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

To reflect:

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God”

(John 1:1)

“The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

(Mark 1:1)

Today's word for reflection is 'begin'. It is taken from the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Advent – at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark (the Gospel for Sundays in Year B, this liturgical year). This course is called 'In the beginning...' taken from the beginning of the Gospel of John. We hear from the Gospel of John in this liturgical year on Sundays as well and John 1 is used at Christmas as well. In today's reading from the Gospel of Matthew, following the Transfiguration Jesus is explaining the order of things to come, what will be the beginnings.

What is your beginning with the good news of Jesus Christ in your life? When and where were you baptised (or if you're not yet baptised where did your story start). Are there several beginnings on your journey of faith, significant points of times you felt close to God and times you felt God was far off? Today as we continue to journey towards the cradle and the beginning

In The Beginning by Dylan Thomas

In the beginning was the three-pointed star,
One smile of light across the empty face,
One bough of bone across the rooting air,
The substance forked that marrowed the first sun,
And, burning ciphers on the round of space,
Heaven and hell mixed as they spun.

In the beginning was the pale signature,
Three-syllabled and starry as the smile,
And after came the imprints on the water,
Stamp of the minted face upon the moon;
The blood that touched the crosstree and the grail
Touched the first cloud and left a sign.

In the beginning was the mounting fire
That set alight the weathers from a spark,
A three-eyed, red-eyed spark, blunt as a flower,
Life rose and spouted from the rolling seas,
Burst in the roots, pumped from the earth and rock
The secret oils that drive the grass.

In the beginning was the word, the word
That from the solid bases of the light
Abstracted all the letters of the void;
And from the cloudy bases of the breath
The word flowed up, translating to the heart
First characters of birth and death.

In the beginning was the secret brain.
The brain was celled and soldered in the thought
Before the pitch was forking to a sun;
Before the veins were shaking in their sieve,
Blood shot and scattered to the winds of light
The ribbed original of love.

The word for each day (3-25 December is taken from Advent Word 2023 #adventword).

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.