



TIMES OF THE LITURGY

Sunday - 7.45am - Lauds | 8.15am - Low Mass | 9.15am - Dominican Rite Mass (Extraordinary Form) | 11am - Sung Conventual Mass | 6pm - Low Mass | 7pm - Vespers.

Monday - Friday - 7am - Lauds | 7.30am - Conventual Mass | 6.15pm - Devotions and Meditation | 6.30pm - Vespers. [N.B. First Fridays of the month, Vespers in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with a period of Adoration from 6.15pm.]

Saturday - 9am - Lauds | 9.30am - Conventual Mass | 4.30-6pm - Confessions | 6.15pm - Sung Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary | 6.30pm - Vespers.

THIS WEEK

- Sun 9 **X SUNDAY PER ANNUM**
- Mon 10 *feria*
- Tue 11 St Barnabas
- Wed 12 *feria*
- Thu 13 St Anthony of Padua
- Fri 14 *feria*
- Sat 15 Our Lady on Saturday
- Sun 16 **XI SUNDAY PER ANNUM**

What is knowing? From 23 to 26 August 2024, the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst, Clitheroe will be offering a residential course on Divine, human, and artificial intelligence. For more information, please visit <<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events>>

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A Men's Day Retreat titled "Called to Serve" will take place on Saturday 6 July 2024 at the Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Join Fr Sean Connolly and a group of Catholic men from the Diocese of East Anglia to discuss and reflect on the mission of service within the family, the parish and wider community. For more details email <mflcoordinator@rcdea.org.uk>.

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Dr Joey Belleza and Fr Dominic White OP are leading an intensive study retreat on Catholic faith and the arts to be held at Stonyhurst, 13-15 September, 2024. While this weekend retreat is open to all, it is especially aimed at university students, as well as practitioners and teachers of art. There are a limited number of discounts for university students. For more information and to register, please visit the retreat webpage at <<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/art-and-faith>>.

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Something to brighten your day: the finalists for the Laudamus Christian art competition are out and the works are beautiful. You can vote until 15th June for your favourite ones here: <https://christian.art/art-competition-finalists/>



Lauds, Mass, and Vespers are broadcast daily on Radio Maria. To listen visit:

<https://radiomariaengland.uk/>

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CHRIST RESPONDS TO THE THREE MOCKERIES OF THE GREEK SPEAKING WORLD

Athanasius in his great work, 'On the Incarnation', speaks of the mockeries of the peoples or gentiles, provoked by the idea of the incarnation of the Son of God. The word for mockery which he uses only occurs once in the New Testament, when St Paul is in Athens. St Paul is speaking at the Areopagus, a small mound at the edge of the citadel of Athens. His speech was being well received until he mentioned the Resurrection, and in the words of the Acts of the Apostles, he says that

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, "We will hear you again about this" (Acts 17:32).

Athanasius was Bishop of Alexandria, and a lifelong defender of the divinity of Christ, a divinity which was co-equal to the divinity of the Father. Although he probably picked up the word for 'mockery' from this passage in the Acts of the Apostles, he does not apply it to the Resurrection but to the fact of the incarnation. The word for the incarnation which he uses, is becoming human, or perhaps, being in humanity, 'enanthroposis'. We see the word for 'human' here but there is also another word he uses to explain the motive of the incarnation, and this is easier for us to understand, since it is the word, 'philanthropy', which means loving humanity. That word has unfortunate connotations now of rich people throwing their money at some worthy cause, yet it has its origin as a word to describe God's attitude to humanity. There is something a little blasphemous, however unintentionally, about describing a human being as loving humanity as through they transcended the humanity to which they belong. Yet the idea of God loving humanity only seems a truism to us because of Christianity. The transcendence of God or divine reality seemed to many in the ancient world to be incompatible with love for humanity. Athanasius mentions the Jews as slandering the divine presence, and the Greeks as mocking it. He is probably thinking of St Paul who says that

...but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:23).

Yet Athanasius uses different words for the attitude of the Jews and the Greeks, slander and mockery, rather than a stumbling block or folly. It is the fact of the crucifixion that St Paul sees as an obstacle or foolishness, while Athanasius is writing about the incarnation itself. He does seem to be making use of Paul's speaking of Jews and Greeks as representing the two halves of humanity. The Jews who cling to a limited view of revelation and the Greeks who represent human reason, but who have little or no direct revelation of divine truths. It is the Greeks who interest Athanasius, and he has little to say about the attitude of those Jews who did not accept Jesus as the Christ.

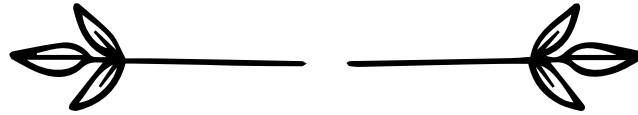
Despite the biblical background of this reference to Jews and Greeks, Athanasius is probably working from his own experience as an apologist for Christianity. It is not certain just how many had accepted Christianity in the time of Athanasius, even though it had the backing of the emperor. There is a common problem with apologetic Christian literature. It might seem to be aimed at opponents of Christianity but there is a strong suspicion that apologetics was more like a literary form. What is happening in these writings is really a way to teach fellow Christians by dealing with what aspects of the faith they had been taught, might seem ridiculous or even repugnant. The mockery of the Greeks then is really our own unconscious willingness to accept Christian teaching. As long as we do so, we are still in part pagans. Athanasius could then be said to be engaged in a therapeutic healing of our unconscious uneasiness about the incarnation.

So he gives three opposite terms for the Word entering into our humanity, for appearing to us, (using the Greek word which gives us 'epiphany'), which come from the mocking attitude to the claims of Christ. This gives us six adjectives, three pairs of antonyms. Either impossible or possible, fitting or unfitting, human or divine. The adjectives are neuter plural, meaning impossible things or possible things, suitable or unsuitable things, human or divine things. This is because Athanasius is not concerned with the incarnation as an intellectual problem but as a group of events to which we have to take an attitude. The pagan might deny that these events had happened at all, but they could not deny that Christianity had erupted into their world and was presenting these events to a world which could no longer ignore them. In the Gospel of St Matthew, 12:41-42, Jesus speaks of something greater than Jonah, and something greater than Solomon, rather than someone greater than these two figures. Athanasius may be thinking of this in speaking in terms of a neuter plural. Christ is the greatest person there is, but both his divinity and humanity are revealed by the events of his life, both what he says and does, but also what was done to him in the crucifixion and the Resurrection. Through the Church these events lead to events in the world, and this continues to happen. We live in the age of Christ, and it is really Christ who is causing these events to happen through his Church.

This is the core of Athanasius' argument. It is precisely because the incarnation seems impossible, an unsuitable mix of the divine and the human, or events which are entirely human, that it is a sign of the Son's presence in the world that he is able to convince us that they are neither impossible nor unsuitable. If we do not accept the divinity, we fall into idolatry. Athanasius would spend his entire life attacking the human tendency to fall into idolatry. He would become famous for his attack on the Arian heresy, which in his mind, was an attempt to make the worship of Christ a sort of idolatry. The Arians regarded the word of God as a lesser God, which for Athanasius meant not God at all. The Arians tried to find a middle ground between the created and the non-created but this is impossible. There can only be in reality, God or that which God has made. In dividing God from his own creation as we should, we might find that the incarnation would be opposed to this. Nothing is impossible for God but what is possible for him has to mean something. What could God becoming human mean then? Why would God demean himself by becoming human? This is what makes the

incarnation seem unfitting. If it is both impossible and unfitting, then no matter what miracles Jesus worked, he had to be just a human being. Yet the paradox is that we do not truly understand God until the incarnation happens.

‘For the more he is mocked by unbelievers, the greater witness he provides of his divinity, because what men cannot accept, since it is impossible, he shows to be possible, and what mock as unsuitable, he establishes these things as suitable by his goodness, and what in their sophistry, men laugh at as human, he shows by his power that they are divine, overturning the illusion of idols by what is thought to be the degradation of the cross, invisibly persuading those who mock and disbelieve, so that they might know his divinity and power.’



ST BARNABAS

Though not named among the twelve apostles of the evangelists, Barnabas emerges in the Acts of the Apostles as one of the most significant of their number. He sold his estate and gave the proceeds to the Church, since all things were to be held in common, and clearly became a leader. He is described as a Levite from Cyprus so, like his friend Paul, was from the Greek world rather than that of Palestine, and he introduced Paul to the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem. He was sent to Antioch apparently to guide the Christians there in their relations with non-Jewish converts, promoting the concept of all being one in Christ. He broke with Paul to go to Cyprus and tradition has it that he was martyred there in the year 61.

ST ANTHONY OF PADUA

Saint Anthony was first of all an Augustinian monk, but he was so impressed by the martyrdom of five Franciscans who had been spreading the faith in Morocco that he became a Franciscan friar himself, so that he could preach the gospel in Africa too. Illness obliged him to leave Morocco, and a storm then drove his ship to Sicily, so that he found himself taking part in the General Chapter of the Franciscans in 1221, where he met Saint Francis of Assisi himself. His preaching career then took him to northern Italy and southern France, then a stronghold of the Albigensian heresy. Later he returned to Italy, to Padua, where he was an outstanding preacher and the first Franciscan theologian. His sermons are full of gentleness, but he reproved the wicked with fearless severity – especially backsliding clergy and the oppressors of the weak.

THE PRIORY OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

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