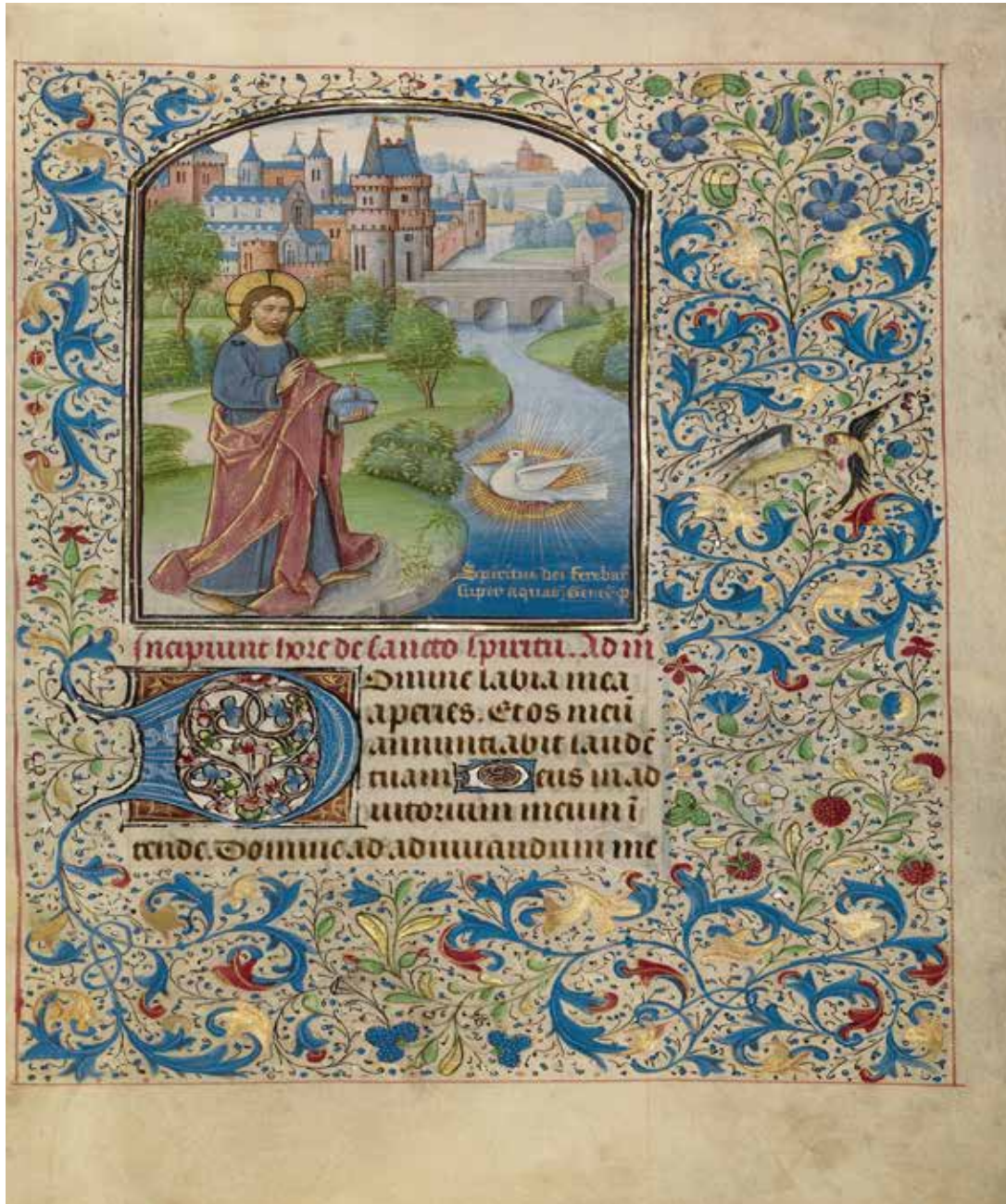


Lectionary Texts for March 10, 2024 • *Fourth Sunday in Lent* - Year B
Numbers 21:4-9 • Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 • Ephesians 2:1-10 • John 3:14-21



John 3:14-21

Salvator Mundi (Savior of the World), c. 1460-1469

A page from the Arenberg Hours

Willem Vrelant, Flemish, ? - 1481

Tempera colors, gold leaf, and ink, 10 1/16" x 6 13/16"

J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California

Continued

The term “Book of Hours” refers to a type of Christian devotional book that was popular in medieval Europe. The Arenberg Hours is particularly notable for its exquisite illumination, and Willem Vrelant and his workshop were particularly skilled at such.

Standing on the banks of a river flowing through a medieval town, Christ is holding an orb indicating his role as *Salvator Mundi*, Savior of the World. Below a hovering dove, a passage from Genesis is inscribed in gold: “The spirit of God moved over the water.” The existence of the Trinity and the promise of salvation being inherent from the beginning of the world are implied by Christ appearing as the Savior of the World, the presence of the dove, and the text from Genesis.

A section of this manuscript is called the *Hours of the Holy Spirit*, with a large illumination prefacing each of eight sets of prayers. This image accompanies the beginning of the section, and the existence of the section indicates that the patron had a special reverence for the Holy Spirit.

The earliest record of Willem Vrelant is in 1449 when he obtained citizenship in Utrecht, although he may have lived there for a number of years. He is recorded as a member of the Bruges Guild of Book-makers from 1454 to 1481. Vrelant had a large and productive workshop, which produced a number of Book of Hours, and after his death his widow continued to run the shop.

— Art curated and narrative provided by Norman Mahan
Document edited and produced by Donna V. Adair
Lay members, St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, Houston

Numbers 21:4-9

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way.

The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.”

Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.”

So Moses prayed for the people.

And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.”

So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the
south.

Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction;
they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress;
he sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

Ephesians 2:1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course
of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among
those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, follow-
ing the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we
were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have
been saved — and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ
Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kind-
ness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not
your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we
are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before-
hand to be our way of life.

John 3:14-21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted
up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that
the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those
who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the
only Son of God.

“And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”