

The Rev. Jay Lawlor “Jesus as the Incursion of God” sermon for the 4th Sunday After the of Epiphany, January 28, 2018

The Rev. Jay Lawlor completed his third week as visiting priest at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond, IN where he preached "Jesus as the Incursion of God."

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, March 1, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) on “Jesus as the Incursion of God” in [sermon](#) for the 4th Sunday After the of Epiphany, Year B, January 28, 2018, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond, IN.



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The Rev. Jay Lawlor

First acts are important. The first act in a book, play, or movie establishes what the story is going to be about and sets us on the journey as that story unfolds. Paying attention to the first thing Jesus does as a public act of ministry in a gospel is important to the theology and outlook of the gospel writer.

In Mark, Jesus' first act of public ministry is to go to the synagogue and teach. While there, he heals a man of an unclean spirit – he calls out evil with authority. The crowd is so amazed at Jesus' teaching “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. (Mark 1:27-28, NRSV)

Mark reveals how Jesus crosses boundaries and exerts his authority all in proclaiming a different vision for the world. Jesus' proclamations threaten the ‘powers-that-be’. It sets up a struggle with the power of evil. For Mark's Gospel, it is both cosmic and earthly.

Matt Skinner, Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn, suggests that: “Mark directs concentrated thematic and theological energy toward depicting Jesus' arrival in the world (and his ministry in the world) as an incursion. Jesus and his message represent nothing less than God's attempt to enter into and reclaim our existence, bringing the reign (“kingdom”) of God into places where other reigns claim to hold sway. [...] God's incursion and Jesus' vision of a different reign provoke opposition in Mark, because other reigning powers never like to be revealed as pretenders and predators.” (Matt Skinner, [Working Preacher](#))

I love Skinner's observation about Jesus being an incursion of God in the world. Jesus arrives on the scene to reveal the reign of God over and against the reigns of this world which are in opposition to God's love.

We often associate the word ‘incursion’ as a hostile entrance. Yet it also means an entering into something, such as an activity or undertaking. Jesus is God entering into the world for the purpose of transformation. A transformation which turns evil on its head and replaces injustice, hatred, and

violence with justice, love, and peace. [...]

The full text of the Rev. Jay Lawlor's sermon is available at <https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/jesus-incursion-god-sermon-jan-28-2018/>

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