

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O God, come to my assistance;
O Lord, make haste to help me!
You are my rescuer, my help;
O Lord, do not delay.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing
kindness,
that, for those who glory in you as their
Creator and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes.
Vanity of vanities, the Preacher says. Vanity
of vanities. All is vanity!
For so it is that a man who has laboured
wisely, skilfully and successfully must leave
what is his own to someone who has not
toiled for it at all. This, too, is vanity and great
injustice; for what does he gain for all the toil
and strain that he has undergone under the
sun? What of all his laborious days, his cares
of office, his restless nights? This, too, is
vanity.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 89

Response:
O Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to the next.

1. You turn men back into dust
and say: "Go back, sons of men."
To your eyes a thousand years
are like yesterday, come and gone,
no more than a watch in the night. (R.)

2. You sweep men away like a dream,
like grass which springs up in the
morning.

In the morning it springs up and flowers:
by evening it withers and fades. (R.)

3. Make us know the shortness of our life
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?
Show pity to your servants. (R.)

4. In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands. (R.)

SECOND READING Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Colossians.

Since you have been brought back to true
life with Christ, you must look for the things
that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at
God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on
heavenly things, not on the things that are on
the earth, because you have died, and now
the life you have is hidden with Christ in God.
But when Christ is revealed – and he is your
life – you too will be revealed in all your glory
with him.

That is why you must kill everything in you
that belongs only to earthly life: fornication,
impurity, guilty passion, evil desires and
especially greed, which is the same thing as
worshipping a false god; and never tell each
other lies. You have stripped off your old
behaviour with your old self, and you have
put on a new self which will progress towards
true knowledge the more it is renewed in
the image of its creator; and in that image
there is no room for distinction between
Greek and Jew, between the circumcised or
the uncircumcised, or between barbarian
and Scythian, slave and free man. There
is only Christ: he is everything and he is in
everything.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your word is truth, O Lord,
consecrate us in the truth.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 12:13-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, "Master,
tell my brother to give me a share of our
inheritance." "My friend," he replied "who
appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of
your claims?" Then he said to them, "Watch,
and be on your guard against avarice of any
kind, for a man's life is not made secure by
what he owns, even when he has more than
he needs."

Then he told them a parable: "There was
once a rich man who, having had a good
harvest from his land, thought to himself,
'What am I to do? I have not enough room to
store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what
I will do: I will pull down my barns and build
bigger ones, and store all my grain and my
goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My
soul, you have plenty of good things laid by
for many years to come; take things easy,
eat, drink, have a good time.' But God said
to him, 'Fool! This very night the demand

will be made for your soul; and this hoard of
yours, whose will it be then?' So it is when a
man stores up treasure for himself in place of
making himself rich in the sight of God."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Graciously sanctify these gifts, O Lord,
we pray,
and, accepting the oblation of this spiritual
sacrifice,
make of us an eternal offering to you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have given us, O Lord, bread from
heaven,
endowed with all delights and sweetness in
every taste.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Accompany with constant protection, O Lord,
those you renew with these heavenly gifts
and, in your never-failing care for them,
make them worthy of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD

Throughout Luke's Gospel, the theme of riches and possessions and the danger they pose to the human person keeps recurring. In today's extract, an anonymous person in the crowd surrounding Jesus asks him to intervene in a family dispute concerning inheritance.

Very often, a rabbi would be asked to adjudicate in such a matter. But Jesus dismisses his request, and rather abruptly at that: he has more serious issues which he wants his hearers to consider. Jesus does not think that the matter is as simple as ensuring fair shares all round: he uses it as a springboard for teaching about avarice, or greed, quite a different subject. Money or possessions may well be necessary for human life, but when they become an obsession, when people think that this will bring them security, they are sadly mistaken, as Jesus illustrates in the parable of the rich fool: this follows his warning about never being satisfied, but always wanting more. Both these responses are provoked by the initial, perhaps seemingly reasonable, request from the voice in the crowd.

The rich man thinks that he can assure his life by what he owns: he does not grasp that life is a gift from God, and that it is God who decides when to withdraw his gift. Another element in the stories of people accepting Jesus' message is that it puts possessions and money in a different light. One result of being converted to Jesus is to share what the person has, that the person becomes free in themselves and are no longer shackled to what they own. Life is a gift and should be treated as such. ■

REFLECT

In Luke's thought, possessions are not evil in themselves; but they can come between the person and the Gospel values which Jesus sets before us. We cannot survive without shelter, food and water and, at the beginning and end of our lives, the care of others. The question which we find put before us in our Gospel readings is, "What is the most important thing in your life?" One way of facing this question is to put ourselves in the shoes of the characters in the stories and

ask ourselves, "How would I react?" We shall encounter several incidents over the coming weeks and consider the response of the characters who feature in them.

In the tradition and life of the Church, from earliest times, there has been religious life, that is, women and men devoting themselves to the service of God and vowing themselves to a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. No matter how idealistic various movements

SAY

To all life thou givest, to
both great and small: in
all life thou livest, the
true life of all.

(W. Chalmers Smith)

LEARN

Luke regards the acquisition of excess wealth or possessions as a dangerous obstacle to accepting Jesus and his message.

This does not mean that money or possessions are somehow evil in themselves:

But when such things become a source of obsession, they can destroy a person's life, their very soul.

To accept Jesus and his message liberates a person – as shown in the story of Zacchaeus the tax-collector.

**DO**

Make the Sign of the Cross: ask the Lord for the wisdom to examine your own priorities in life, then act on them.

have been at their beginning, the physical demands of basic human existence have usually led to a modification of the original vision and practice.

Perhaps Jesus is asking us all today to examine our priorities and to think about what is most important in our lives: different people have different needs; there is no "one size fits all" – except the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel. ■