

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,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:1-3

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord:

Oh, come to the water all you who are
thirsty;
though you have no money, come!
Buy corn without money, and eat,
and, at no cost, wine and milk.
Why spend money on what is not bread,
your wages on what fails to satisfy?
Listen, listen to me and you will have good
things to eat
and rich food to enjoy.
Pay attention, come to me;
listen, and your soul will live.
With you I will make an everlasting
covenant
out of the favours promised to David.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 144

Response:

**You open wide your hand, O Lord,
you grant our desires.**

- The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)

- The eyes of all creatures look to you
and you give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand,
grant the desires of all who live. (R.)
- The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
call on him from their hearts. (R.)

SECOND READING

Romans 8:35.37-39

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

Nothing can come between us and the love of
Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or
being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes,
or being threatened or even attacked. These
are the trials through which we triumph, by
the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor
life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists,
nothing still to come, not any power, or
height or depth, nor any created thing, can
ever come between us and the love of God
made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. alleluia!

Blessings on the King who comes,
in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest
heavens!

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 14:13-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

When Jesus received the news of John
the Baptist's death he withdrew by boat
to a lonely place where they could be by
themselves. But the people heard of this and,
leaving the towns, went after him on foot. So
as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd;
and he took pity on them and healed their
sick.

When evening came, the disciples went
to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and
the time has slipped by; so send the people
away, and they can go to the villages to
buy themselves some food." Jesus replied,
"There is no need for them to go: give them
something to eat yourselves." But they
answered, "All we have with us is five loaves
and two fish." "Bring them here to me," he
said. He gave orders that the people were to
sit down on the grass; then he took the five
loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to
heaven and said the blessing. And breaking
the loaves he handed them to his disciples
who gave them to the crowds. They all ate as
much as they wanted, and they collected the
scraps remaining, twelve baskets full. Those
who ate numbered about five thousand men,
to say nothing of women and children.

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 friend who can be silent with us in
a moment of despair or confusion, who
can stay with us in an hour of grief and
bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing,
not healing, not curing: that is a friend who
cares."

Henri Nouwen

THE WORD

A LAVISH GENEROSITY

(MATTHEW 14:13-21)

In today's Gospel, Jesus sees that the people are hungry and he responds to their need.

He says a prayer of blessing and then gives the disciples food to share among the crowd. To their amazement, not only is there enough food for everyone but the leftovers fill twelve baskets. He doesn't let the people go hungry. He doesn't just give them food; he gives them more than enough to eat. There is a superabundance of food.

It is a foretaste of the eternal banquet in the kingdom of heaven, and a statement of how we too must live. ■

REFLECT

Today's Gospel speaks of love and generosity. It echoes the kind of lavish love that St Paul writes about in the second reading. Both challenge us in two ways.

First, as individuals. They remind us that to be a Christian means to be generous. We must share – not just our money, but also our time, our love, our very selves with all who are in need. There is no such thing as the private Christian.

Second, they challenge us as a community, a society. As Christians, it is not enough that we are charitable. We are also obliged to build a more just world. We cannot be indifferent to the poor, those who do not have enough to eat. Catholic social teaching is one of the Church's greatest secrets. Most people know where the Church stands on sexual morality. And many think that sex (and money) are all the Church talks about. But the Church has a whole body of wonderful teaching built up over time that speaks about care for the poor, teaching that speaks of solidarity and places the Church and its members firmly on the side of the voiceless and the oppressed. It was because of his fearless defence of the poor of El Salvador that Archbishop Oscar Romero was martyred while celebrating Mass. It was because of her support for the indigenous people of the Amazon that Sr Dorothy Stang was shot dead in 2005. Their fidelity to the Gospel placed them on the side of the poor, even to the extent of losing their lives. The great Brazilian Archbishop Hélder Câmara summed up the distinction between charity and justice in a famous phrase: "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist."

To be a follower of Jesus is to work for justice. In fact, the Church teaches that action for justice is a constitutive part of living the Gospel. It is not enough for us to tell the poor, the abused, the unjustly treated, that we will pray for them or give money to charity to support them. We must also do whatever we can to address inequality and injustice. There is plenty of food to go around if we are prepared to share. ■

SAY

**"Lord, help me to be the
kind of person you want
me to be. Amen."**

DO

In today's second reading St Paul makes a wonderful profession of faith. He says there is nothing that can separate him from God's love made visible in Christ: not persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger or even death. No matter what he does or doesn't do, God loves him. He is absolutely certain of God's love. Can you say the same thing? Make his profession of faith your profession of faith.

PRAY

Everything about the Eucharist speaks of solidarity and community. We share the one meal, we call each other sisters and brothers. We offer each other the sign of peace, the sign of unity and togetherness. Pray for a deeper appreciation of the Eucharist.

LEARN

Jesus is the bread of life.

The Christian has a passion for justice.

The Christian is always aware of the needs of others.

THE WORD

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Look to your covenant, O Lord, and forget not the life of your poor ones for ever. Arise, O God, and defend your cause, and forget not the cries of those who seek you.

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

Almighty ever-living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters, that we may merit to enter into the inheritance which you have promised. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING 1 Kings 19:9.11-13

A reading from the first book of the Kings. When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God, he went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then he was told, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord." Then the Lord himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 84:9-14

Response: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.

- I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace. His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. (R.)
- Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. (R.)
- The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. (R.)

SECOND READING Romans 9:1-5

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

What I want to say is no pretence; I say it in union with Christ – it is the truth – my conscience in union with the Holy Spirit assures me of it too. What I want to say is this: my sorrow is so great, my mental anguish so endless, I would willingly be condemned and be cut off from Christ if it could help my brothers of Israel, my own flesh and blood. They were adopted as sons, they were given the glory and the covenants; the Law and the ritual were drawn up for them, and the promises were made to them. They are descended from the patriarchs and from their flesh and blood came Christ who is above all, God for ever blessed! Amen.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. alleluia! Blessings on the King who comes, in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens! Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 14:22-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a headwind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. "It is a ghost" they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them saying, "Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid." It was Peter who answered. "Lord," he said "if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water." "Come" said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. "Lord! Save me!" he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. "Man of little faith," he said "why did you doubt?" And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, "Truly, you are the Son 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

Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord, who gives you your fill of finest wheat.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the communion in your Sacrament that we have consumed, save us, O Lord, and confirm us in the light of your truth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"True, God is infinite majesty, but he is also infinite goodness and infinite love. There can be no greater Lord than God; neither can there be a more ardent lover than he".

St Alphonsus Liguori



Imagine the disciples' panic. They are in the boat all by themselves when a storm begins to rage. It's so bad the boat is in danger of sinking. They are full of fear. All seems lost... and then they see Jesus walking towards them, on the water.

Eager as ever, Peter asks Jesus if he, too, can walk on the water, and Jesus invites him to come to him. Peter climbs out of the boat, but the wind rises, and he begins to sink. Even Peter, the most important figure in the early Church, has a faith that falters in the midst of the storm.

Jesus saves him, and castigates him for his weak faith. As soon as they are back in the boat, the storm eases, the winds calm, and the awestruck disciples acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God.

The message is clear: the boat represents the Church, and the disciples represent all believers, while the storm represents the difficulties and doubts the Church is facing. The boat will face many storms, but if the disciples make sure to recognise Jesus and trust in him, they will always be safe. Trust in God and an adventurous faith have the power to overcome doubting fear. ■

REFLECT

One of the classic songs of the last half-century is "Bridge over Troubled Water". At the time he wrote it, Paul Simon was influenced by Gospel music, and this influence comes across in the chorus of the song:

"When you're weary, feeling small
When tears are in your eyes
I will dry them all
I'm on your side
Oh, when times get rough
And friends just can't be found
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down..."

The words speak of offering comfort, solace, help, refuge. It is the assurance Jesus offers his frightened followers in today's Gospel.

It's what he offers us in our distress and at all times. Jesus is our bridge over troubled water. It's easy to trust in Jesus when life is good and all is plain sailing. Like Peter, we can even begin to think we can walk on water. Nothing can sink us.

Then, suddenly or over time, the skies darken and storm winds blow in. Maybe a relationship crumbles or our health fails, or financial woes overwhelm us, or scandal envelops us, and, like Peter, we flounder. We begin to sink. Our faith is tested. We feel lost and frightened and afraid. But we are not alone. Jesus is with us in every storm in which we find ourselves. He never abandons us. Trust in him, call out to him, as Peter does, and we will be safe. ■

SAY
"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."

DO

As Christians, we know that Jesus is with us in the midst of any storm in which we find ourselves. But he is more than with us; he calls on us to face that storm. To have courage. To trust. To be not afraid. Think of the challenges and difficulties you and your loved ones are facing at this time. Ask the Lord's help in facing them.



PRAY

Pray for those who feel as if they are caught in a storm – those who are ill, or depressed, or suicidal, or bullied, or suffer from discrimination or intimidation – that they may experience Jesus's soothing, calming, saving presence with them.

LEARN

God is with us always, in good times and bad.

It is okay to experience doubts and difficulties so long as we continue to trust in God.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let us all rejoice in the Lord,
as we celebrate the feast day in honour of
the Virgin Mary,
at whose Assumption the Angels rejoice
and praise the Son of God.

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

Almighty ever-living God,
who assumed the Immaculate Virgin Mary,
the Mother of your Son,
body and soul into heavenly glory,
grant, we pray,
that, always attentive to the things that are
above,
we may merit to be sharers of her glory.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING *Apocalypse 11:19; 12:1-6. 10*

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse.

The sanctuary of God in heaven opened,
and the ark of the covenant could be seen
inside it.

Now a great sign appeared in heaven; a
woman, adorned with the sun, standing
on the moon, and with the twelve stars on
her head for a crown. She was pregnant,
and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of
childbirth. Then a second sign appeared
in the sky, a huge red dragon which had
seven heads and ten horns, and each of the
seven heads crowned with a coronet. Its
tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky
and dropped them to earth, and the dragon
stopped in front of the woman as she was
having the child, so that he could eat it as
soon as it was born from its mother. The
woman brought a male child into the world,
the son who was to rule all the nations with
an iron sceptre, and the child was taken
straight up to God and to his throne, while
the woman escaped into the desert where
God had made a place of safety ready. Then
I heard a voice shout from heaven, "Victory
and power and empire for ever have been
won by our God, and all authority for his
Christ."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 44

Response:

**On your right stands the queen,
in garments of gold.**

- The daughters of kings are among your
loved ones.
On your right stands the queen in gold of
Ophir.
Listen, O daughter, give ear to my words:
forget your own people and your father's
house. (R.)
- So will the king desire your beauty:
he is your Lord, pay homage to him.
They are escorted amid gladness and joy;
they pass within the palace of the king (R.)

SECOND READING *1 Corinthians 15:20-26*

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

Christ has been raised from the dead, the
first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.
Death came through one man and in the
same way the resurrection of the dead has
come through one man. Just as all men die
in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in
Christ; but all of them in their proper order:
Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the
coming of Christ, those who belong to him.
After that will come the end, when he hands
over the kingdom to God the Father, having
done away with every sovereignty, authority
and power. For he must be king until he has
put all his enemies under his feet and the last
of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for
everything is to be put under his feet.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Mary has been taken up into heaven;
all the choirs of angels are rejoicing.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 1:39-56

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

Mary set out and went as quickly as she
could to a town in the hill country of Judah.
She went into Zechariah's house and greeted
Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard
Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb
and Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit. She
gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you
are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit
of your womb. Why should I be honoured
with a visit from the mother of my Lord?
For the moment your greeting reached my
ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes,
blessed is she who believed that the promise
made her by Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the
Lord
and my spirit exults in God my saviour;
because he has looked upon his lowly
handmaid.
Yes, from this day forward all generations
will call me blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for
me.

Holy is his name,
and his mercy reaches from age to age for
those who fear him.

He has shown the power of his arm,
he has routed the proud of heart.
He has pulled down princes from their
thrones and exalted the lowly.

The hungry he has filled with good things,
the rich sent empty away.
He has come to the help of Israel his
servant, mindful of his mercy
– according to the promise he made to our
ancestors –
of his mercy to Abraham and to his
descendants for ever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three
months and then went back home.

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

May this oblation, our tribute of homage,
rise up to you, O Lord,
and, through the intercession of the most
Blessed Virgin Mary,
whom you assumed into heaven,
may our hearts, aflame with the fire of love,
constantly long for you.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**All generations will call me blessed,
for he who is mighty has done great things
for me.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the Sacrament of salvation,
we ask you to grant, O Lord,
that, through the intercession of the Blessed
Virgin Mary,
whom you assumed into heaven,
we may be brought to the glory of the
resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE WORD

Statue of Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Grace

In today's Gospel we hear Mary's Magnificat. It is a joyful hymn of
praise to God who has not forgotten his lowly handmaid and has
done such great things for her.

But it is also a subversive hymn, and it shows Mary to be a radical woman who hungers
for justice for the poor and the little ones. Mary presents an image of God as one who
pulls the mighty from their thrones and raises up the lowly, as one who fills the hungry
with good things and sends the rich away empty. She voices God's opposition to
oppression, injustice and inequality of whatever kind.

Mary's Magnificat hymn shows that she is no gentle, passive, silent woman. She is, rather,
a voice of the voiceless, and mother of all who are oppressed and overlooked and weak.
Mary's preferences and her hopes for our world are our preferences and our hopes too. ■

REFLECT

We Catholics have traditionally held Mary in the highest esteem. We rank her as
first among the saints, and we honour her with feasts and titles because, in the
words of Vatican II, she is "the Church's outstanding model in faith and love".
Mary is our model because she shows us better than anyone ever did, or ever will, what
it means to be a disciple. Her whole life was a constant "yes" to God.

When the angel Gabriel told her at the annunciation of God's astonishing plan for her,
she was surprised and afraid, but she did not allow her fear to overwhelm her. She
answered, "Be it done unto me according to your word." Her "yes" to God changed the
course of history. It allowed God's Spirit to take hold of her so that the Son of God could
take flesh in our midst. No one has ever listened more willingly or responded more
generously to God.

In his public ministry, Jesus described the true disciple as one who hears the word of
God and keeps it. That sums up Mary in a nutshell. She shows us what it means to listen
to and keep God's word. She shows us the true meaning of faith and trust in God. ■

SAY

"Lord, thank you for giving
me Mary as my mother. Help
me to follow her example so
that I may share in her son's
resurrection. Amen."

PRAY

God, thank you for the life of Mary, the
mother of Jesus.
Thank you for her goodness.
Thank you for her openness.
Thank you for her generosity.
Thank you for her faith.
Thank you for her example.
Thank you for her perseverance.
Thank you for her faithfulness.
Thank you for her resurrection joy.
Thank you for taking her up to heaven.
Thank you for her prayers for us.
Thank you for reminding us, through her,
that we are made for heaven.
Thank you for Mary, the mother of Jesus
and thank you, God, for all your good gifts.

DO

Rejoice in good news.

Pray for those who receive bad news.

Ponder the joy and peace of the saints in
heaven.

LEARN

Today we celebrate the feast of the
Assumption of Mary. We celebrate our belief
that Mary was taken up, body and soul, into
heaven, where she enjoys eternal life in the
company of her son. It is a joyful feast for
us Christians because it points to what we
believe will be our destiny. We believe that
what God has done for Mary, God will do
for us also; that at the end of time God will
raise our mortal bodies and bring us into the
fullness of God's life for ever.



The statue of the Virgin Mary is escorted
during the annual Assumption procession in
the Le Panier district of Marseille, France.

Sunday Message

23 AUGUST 2020

21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 1

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

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

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 22:19-23

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace:

I dismiss you from your office, I remove you from your post, and the same day I call on my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiyah. I invest him with your robe, gird him with your sash, entrust him with your authority; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. I place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; should he open, no one shall close, should he close, no one shall open. I drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a throne of glory for his father's house.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 137

Response:

Your love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands.

1. I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, you have heard the words of my mouth. Before the angels I will bless you. I will adore before your holy temple. (R.)

2. I thank you for your faithfulness and love which excel all we ever knew of you. On the day I called, you answered; you increased the strength of my soul. (R.)

3. The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly and the haughty he knows from afar. Your love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands. (R.)

SECOND READING

Romans 11:33-36

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

How rich are the depths of God – how deep his wisdom and knowledge – and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 16:13-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But you," he said, "who do you say I am?" Then Simon Peter spoke up, "You are the Christ," he said, "the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven." Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

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

O Lord, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

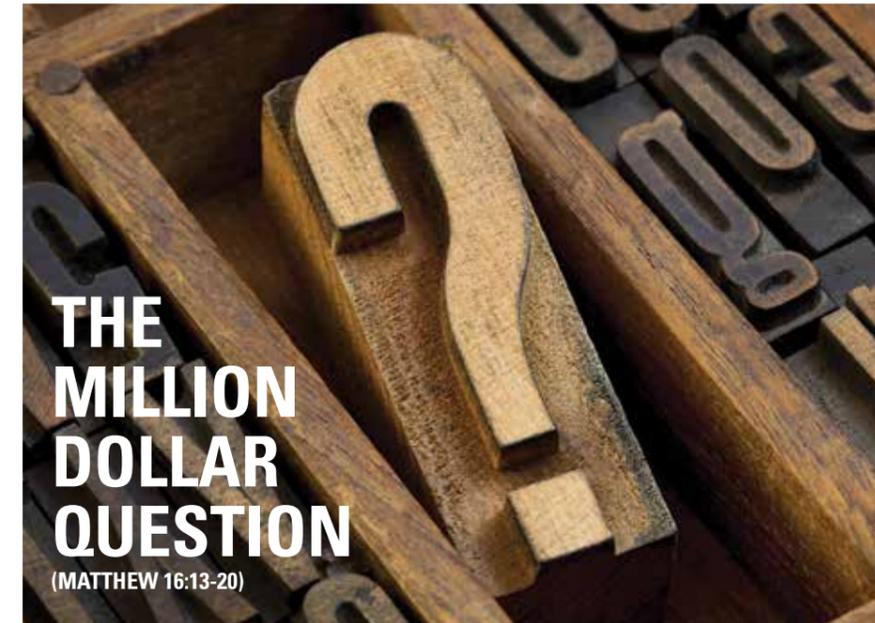
The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Having a clear faith, based on the creed of the church is often labelled today as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism, which is letting oneself be tossed and swept along by every wind of teaching, looks like the only attitude acceptable to today's standards."

Pope Benedict XVI



Today's Gospel is one of the most dramatic in Matthew. Jesus has been with his disciples for some time. They have listened to him speak and preach; they have watched him perform great miracles.

Now Jesus wants to see if they have come to realise just who he really is. He asks them, "Who do people say I am?" The disciples give him a variety of answers. "Some think you are John the Baptist, some Elijah, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." And then comes Jesus' pointed question. "But you," he asks them, "who do you say that I am?"

It is Peter who answers for all of them: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus congratulates Peter on getting the answer right, and tells him that he is going to be the rock upon which the Church will be built.

Jesus' pointed question was not asked just of the disciples that day in Caesarea Philippi two thousand years ago. It has been central for Christians ever since the resurrection. It is asked of us today too: Who do we say Jesus is? Who is Jesus for us? Our answer to that question is absolutely crucial because it will tell us an awful lot about the kind of people we are.

If we acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, if Jesus is for us the way, the truth and the life, then that must shape and form the lives we lead, the values we live by, the decisions we make, the very order of our lives. ■

REFLECT

Jesus asked them the safe question first, the easy question: "Who do others say that I am?" It was safe and easy because to answer it required no commitment and no risk. All it requires to answer a safe question is a bit of curiosity, and some straight reporting.

Asking the easy question was Jesus' way of teeing up the hard question, the one he really wanted to ask, the personal question: "OK, that's what other people

say, but who do you, my closest friends, say that I am?" And Peter got the answer right: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Throughout our lives as Catholics we hear a lot about Jesus. We listen to homilies about him every Sunday, we read books about him and leaflets such as this one; we may remember what we were taught about him in school all those years ago. All of this is good, but Jesus' question in

SAY

"Lord, I know you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

DO

Reflect on your faith and on your relationship with Jesus. Imagine that Jesus is asking you the very same question that he put to his disciples that day in Caesarea Philippi. Who do you say Jesus is?

LEARN

The Christian experience, Pope Francis emphasises, is with the person of Jesus, not a series of philosophical teachings. It is an experience, not an idea; a relationship, not a line of arguments or contention. It is not enough to know who Jesus is; we must have a personal relationship with him.

Jesus chose Peter to be the first Pope. The popes are the successors of St Peter.

Jesus assures us that whatever happens, his Church will go on. The gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

PRAY

Take some time today to pray for Pope Francis. He faces many challenges, including strong opposition from elements in the Church. Ask the Lord to help him in his difficult task. Thank the Lord for him.



today's Gospel goes beyond all that. He doesn't want to know what we have read or heard other people say about him; he's not interested in their views. He wants to know our views, what we individually have to say about him. He is asking each of us to answer that question personally and honestly for ourselves.

That's a risky question because our answer will shape the people we are and how we live. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.
O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call to you.

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

God of might, giver of every good gift, put into our hearts the love of your name, so that, by deepening our sense of reverence, you may nurture in us what is good and, by your watchful care, keep safe what you have nurtured. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 20:7-9

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.
You have seduced me, Lord, and I have let myself be seduced; you have overpowered me: you were the stronger.
I am a daily laughing-stock, everybody's butt. Each time I speak the word, I have to howl and proclaim: "Violence and ruin!" The word of the Lord has meant for me insult, derision, all day long. I used to say, "I will not think about him, I will not speak in his name any more." Then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones. The effort to restrain it wearied me, I could not bear it.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 62

Response:

For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord my God.

- O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water. (R.)

- So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory. For your love is better than life, my lips will speak your praise. (R.)
- So I will bless you all my life, in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul shall be filled as with a banquet, my mouth shall praise you with joy. (R.)
- For you have been my help; in the shadow of your wings I rejoice. My soul clings to you; your right hand holds me fast. (R.)

SECOND READING

Romans 12:1-2

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

Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 16:21-27

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day. Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. "Heaven preserve you, Lord," he said. "This must not happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path, because the way you think is not God's way but man's."

Then Jesus said to his disciples. "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for this life?"

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour."

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

May this sacred offering, O Lord, confer on us always the blessing of salvation, that what it celebrates in mystery it may accomplish in power. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

How great is the goodness, Lord, that you keep for those who fear you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed by this bread from the heavenly table, we beseech you, Lord, that, being the food of charity, it may confirm our hearts and stir us to serve you in our neighbour. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"The splendour of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the little violet of its scent nor the daisy of its simple charm. If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness."

St Thérèse of Lisieux

THE WORD

In today's Gospel Jesus prepares his disciples for the ordeal he is about to face in Jerusalem.

He tells them he will suffer greatly and be put to death, and that he will be raised up on the third day. The disciples are appalled. Just a little earlier Peter had declared Jesus to be the Messiah. In the Jewish mind the Messiah was associated with glory and victory, not suffering and death. If Jesus was the Messiah, he could not suffer and die.

Peter decides to point this out to Jesus. "Heaven preserve you, Lord," he says. "This must not happen to you." But Jesus turns on Peter and denounces him in harsh language: "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path." Peter must have been gobsmacked by the violence of Jesus' response. Only a short while before, Jesus had told Peter he would be the rock upon which he would build his Church; now Jesus tells him that what he has said belongs to the realm of Satan.

Without realising it, Peter was playing the role of Satan, tempting Jesus to follow the path of an earthly messiah, full of glory and prestige, rather than keep to his Father's plan. Peter failed to understand the mission of Jesus. For Jesus, the only thing that mattered was proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom. He knew that some would not like his message, and that it would ultimately cost him his life. But he knew too that if it came to a choice between saving his skin or being true to his Father, there was only one decision he could make. He could not betray God even if it meant saving his life because it would be death for him; he would no longer be united with God.

Jesus knew that fidelity to the Father would mean having to take up his cross, and that anyone who wished to follow him would have to take up his or her cross too. But he assures his disciples that it is a price worth paying – for it is the guarantee of eternal life. ■

REFLECT

The monks had a major decision to make. An Islamic insurgency was taking place in Algeria, and many lives were being lost. A community of French Trappists had lived in the monastery of Tibhirine for decades, in harmony with the local Muslim population. Now, their harmony was being disrupted, and the monks had to decide whether to get out of the country. They chose to remain. Despite the growing danger, and the death threats they faced, they decided to stand in solidarity with the townspeople. On the night of 26-27 March 1996, terrorists seized seven of the monks and took them away. Two months later, their bodies were discovered. They had given their lives out of love for God and God's people.

Like those Trappist monks, countless Christians have given their lives for the Gospel over the centuries. It's still happening. If anything, the numbers are

increasing. Remember Fr Jacques Hamel, the elderly French priest murdered in July 2016 while he celebrated Mass in a Normandy church. Or the image of a long line of young men kneeling in an arid desert, each with a sword-wielding executioner standing behind him. They were being martyred simply because they were Coptic Christians.

Martyrdom takes other forms, too. As Pope Francis states in *Gaudete et Exultate*: "Persecutions are not a reality of the past, for today too we experience them, whether by the shedding of blood, as is the case with so many contemporary martyrs, or by more subtle means, by slander and lies. Jesus calls us blessed when people 'utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.' At other times, persecution can take the form of gibes that try to caricature our faith and make us seem ridiculous."

SAY

"Lord, help me to follow you faithfully. Give me the courage to take up my cross if I have to. Amen."

DO

Think about your life and your priorities. Do you follow the way of the world or the way of Christ?

PRAY

It is so difficult to follow Jesus. Even Peter, the first Pope, found it hard. In last Sunday's Gospel he is praised for correctly identifying who Jesus is; now Jesus rebukes him for opposing the cross. Pray for all Christians, that we may constantly strive to follow Jesus to the best of our ability.

LEARN

To be a follower of Christ often means going against the values of the world we live in.

The Christian is one who puts God first – at whatever cost.