

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Forsake me not, O Lord, my God;
be not far from me!
Make haste and come to my help,
O Lord, my strong salvation!

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 and merciful God,
by whose gift your faithful offer you
right and praiseworthy service,
grant, we pray,
that we may hasten without stumbling
to receive the things you have promised.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
on God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Malachi 1:14 – 2:28-10

A reading from the Prophet Malachi

I am a great king says the Lord of hosts, and
my name is feared throughout the nations.
And now, priests, this warning is for you.
If you do not listen, if you do not find it in
your heart to glorify my name, says the
Lord of hosts, I will send the curse on you
and curse your very blessing. You have
strayed from the way; you have caused
many to stumble by your teaching. You have
destroyed the covenant of Levi, says the
Lord of hosts. And so I in my turn have made
you contemptible and vile in the eyes of the
whole people in repayment for the way you
have not kept to my paths but have shown
partiality in your administration.
Have we not all one Father? Did not one God
create us? Why, then, do we break faith with
one another, profaning the covenant of our
ancestors?

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 130

Response:

Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord.

- O Lord, my heart is not proud
nor haughty my eyes.
I have not gone after things too great
nor marvels beyond me. (R.)
- Truly I have set my soul
in silence and peace.
A weaned child on its mother's breast,
even so is my soul. (R.)
- O Israel, hope in the Lord
both now and for ever. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9.13

A reading from St Paul's first letter to the
Thessalonians.

Like a mother feeding and looking after
her own children, we felt so devoted and
protective towards you, and had come to
love you so much, that we were eager to
hand over to you not only the Good News but
our whole lives as well. Let me remind you,
brothers, how hard we used to work, slaving
night and day so as not to be a burden on
any one of you while we were proclaiming
God's Good News to you.

Another reason why we constantly thank
God for you is that as soon as you heard
the message that we brought you as God's
message, you accepted it for what it really
is, God's message and not some human
thinking; and it is still a living power among
you who believe it.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 23:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

Addressing the people and his disciples
Jesus said, "The scribes and the Pharisees
occupy the chair of Moses. You must
therefore do what they tell you and listen to
what they say; but do not be guided by what
they do: since they do not practise what they
preach. They tie up heavy burdens and lay
them on men's shoulders, but will they lift a
finger to move them? Not they! Everything
they do is done to attract attention, like
wearing broader phylacteries and longer
tassels, like wanting to take the place of
honour at banquets and the front seats in the
synagogues, being greeted obsequiously in
the market squares and having people call
them Rabbi.

"You, however, must not allow yourselves
to be called Rabbi, since you have only one
Master, and you are all brothers. You must
call no one on earth your father, since you
have only one Father, and he is in heaven.
Nor must you allow yourselves to be called
teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the
Christ. The greatest among you must be your

servant. Anyone who exalts himself will be
humbled, and anyone who humbles himself
will be exalted."

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 these sacrificial offerings, O Lord,
become for you a pure oblation,
and for us a holy outpouring of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence, O Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the working of your power, O Lord,
increase in us, we pray,
so that, renewed by these heavenly
Sacraments,
we may be prepared by your gift
for receiving what they promise.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

WHAT SORT OF LEADER DO WE WANT?



It is often easier to state rules in terms of what people should not do than in terms of what they *should*. The Ten Commandments are clearer and more definite than the Eight Beatitudes.

In a similar way, we can illustrate what a leader *should be* if we give examples of what such a person *should not be* or should *not* do. In today's extract from Matthew's gospel, we hear an attack on the scribes and Pharisees. But rather than concentrating on the negative picture the evangelist presents of the leaders of the Jewish community, we might think about what he is implying about the leaders of his own Jewish-Christian community, and, by implication, *any* Christian community. It might be something like this:

Christian leaders have a position of authority which those in their care should respect: this means that the leaders have a duty to be people of personal integrity, whose lives match their words;

they will follow the example of Jesus their Master in their interpretation of the law of the church community: his yoke, that is, his teaching, is easy and the consequent burden is light;

they will be humble and modest in dress and demeanour: they will take whatever place is available at meals and at community events;

they will avoid titles which suggest that they are special people and on a higher level than their brothers and sisters in the community;

they will recognise that all are equal within the community and that they themselves are also students of the one Teacher, the Christ;

they will regard themselves as the servants of the community: the higher the position, the greater the call to serve;

they will remember that whoever humbles themselves, God will honour: whoever put themselves above others, God will bring down.

Underlying all of this is the teaching of Jesus that the Son of Man came to serve, not to be served, and to give his life for all people. Matthew's tirade against the leaders of the synagogue of his day is no less relevant for the leaders of the Church today. ■

LEARN

A phylactery is the leather container holding words of the Law which an orthodox Jew wears on his forehead during prayer.

The tassels on a garment are a reminder to the wearer to think about and practise the Law.

Scribes were originally those who simply copied documents:

because they had to understand what they were writing, the scribes gradually came to be involved in government affairs and became the civil servants of their time.

REFLECT

Any organisation has to have structures if it is to function properly. Even the Twelve Apostles had to have a treasurer. The larger the institution, the more officials it needs. The Scriptures are the word of God and so have a permanent value and message for us today. As we reflect on the life of the Church in our country, we are all entitled to express our view on the kind of leadership we need and the sort of person who should occupy positions of service-authority among the People of God. Within the Catholic Church there is no great tradition of consulting the people on the kind of priest they need and whether a particular candidate is actually suitable to be ordained or to be appointed to a particular parish. With the shortage of ordained celibate men, is it not time that as a Church we had an open and frank discussion about these matters? The Holy Spirit is not limited to the clergy. ■

SAY

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful: grant us wisdom.

DO

Take any chance to make known your views on the sort of leader your local community and the wider Church needs. This is your right and responsibility, not a privilege granted by any higher authority.