

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard;
proclaim to the ends of the earth:
The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.

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

Grant, almighty God,
that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion
these days of joy,
which we keep in honour of the risen Lord,
and that what we relive in remembrance
we may always hold to in what we do.
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 Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Philip went to a Samaritan town and
proclaimed the Christ to them. The people
united in welcoming the message Philip
preached, either because they had heard
of the miracles he worked or because they
saw them for themselves. There were, for
example, unclean spirits that came shrieking
out of many who were possessed, and
several paralytics and cripples were cured.
As a result there was great rejoicing in that
town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that
Samaria had accepted the word of God, they
sent Peter and John to them, and they went
down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to
receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not
come down on any of them: they had only
been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.
Then they laid hands on them, and they
received the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 65

Response:

Cry out with joy to God all the earth,
or
Alleluia!

1. Cry out with joy to God all the earth,
O sing to the glory of his name.

O render him glorious praise.

Say to God: "How tremendous your
deeds!" (R.)

2. "Before you all the earth shall bow;
shall sing to you, sing to your name!"
Come and see the works of God,
tremendous his deeds among men. (R.)
3. He turned the sea into dry land,
they passed through the river dry-shod.
Let our joy then be in him;
he rules for ever by his might. (R.)
4. Come and hear, all who fear God.
I will tell what he did for my soul:
Blessed be God who did not reject my
prayer
nor withhold his love for me. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Peter 3:15-18

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and
always have your answer ready for people
who ask you the reason for the hope that
you all have. But give it with courtesy and
respect and with a clear conscience, so that
those who slander you when you are living
a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in
the accusations that they bring. And if it is
the will of God that you should suffer, it is
better to suffer for doing right than for doing
wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he
was, had died once for sins, died for the
guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he
was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to
life.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: "If anyone loves me he will keep
my word,
and my Father will love him, and we shall
come to him."
Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 14:15-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"If you love me you will keep my
commandments.

I shall ask the Father,
and he will give you another Advocate
to be with you for ever,
that Spirit of truth
whom the world can never receive
since it neither sees nor knows him;
but you know him,
because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans;
I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see
me;
but you will see me,
because I live and you will live.

On that day
you will understand that I am in my Father
and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments
and keeps them
will be one who loves me
and anybody who loves me will be loved by
my Father,
and I shall love him and show myself to
him."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May our prayers rise up to you, O Lord,
together with the sacrificial offerings,
so that, purified by your graciousness,
we may be conformed to the mysteries of
your mighty love.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

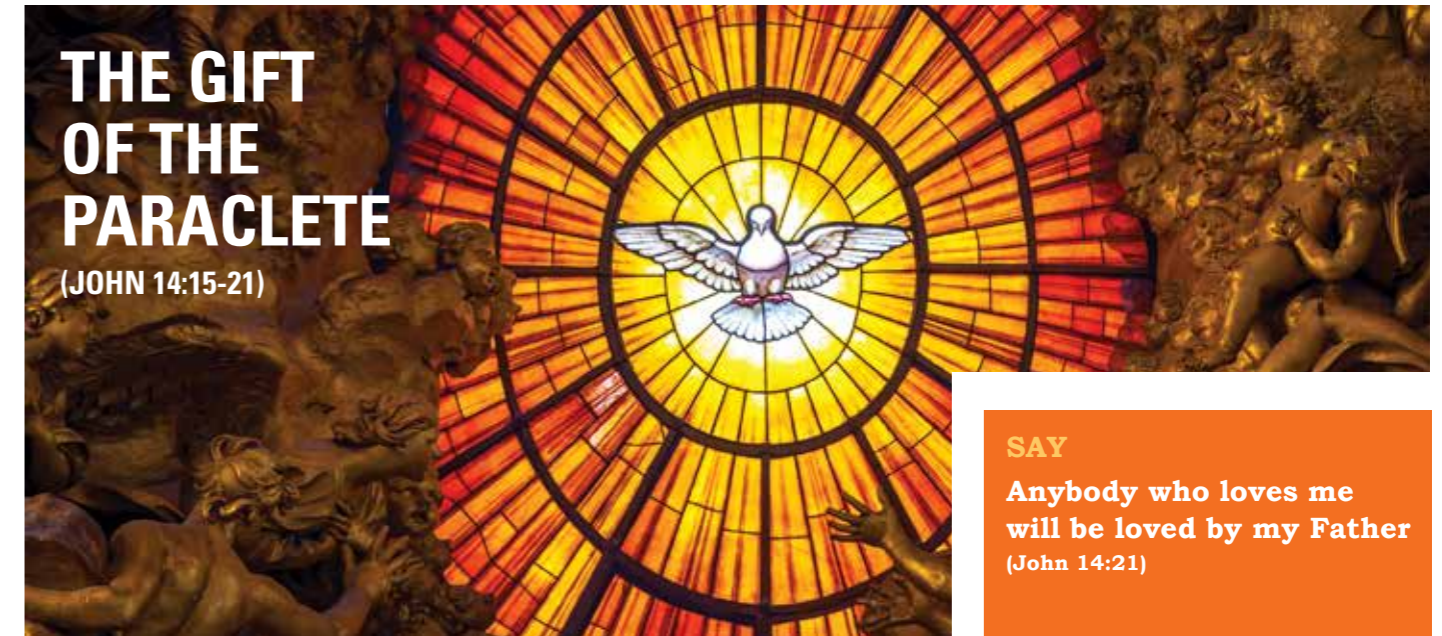
If you love me, keep my commandments,
says the Lord,
and I will ask the Father and he will send you
another Paraclete,
to abide with you for ever, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty ever-living God,
who restore us to eternal life in the
Resurrection of Christ,
increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this
paschal Sacrament
and pour into our hearts the strength of this
saving food.
Amen.

THE GIFT OF THE PARACLETE

(JOHN 14:15-21)



Detail from the Throne of St Peter in Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome

Our Gospel passage today focuses on Jesus' imminent departure. However, the end of his physical presence will not mean the conclusion of his being with his disciples.

What Jesus has done for his followers, praying for them and revealing the Father, will continue through the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who will be given as part of Jesus' being glorified at his hour. The Spirit will communicate truth, and thus be the ongoing presence of God in the world. Jesus' leaving should therefore not be a source of sorrow or grief, but rather the beginning of a new age which will be marked by the gift of the Paraclete: by love, a theme which runs right through our Gospel extract; this will be shown in the keeping of Jesus' commandments and the promise of a future time when the Son and the Father will dwell with the disciples.

The followers of Jesus will experience this ongoing presence within the worshipping community, especially in the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. Those who believe, love and keep the commandments of Jesus will experience the ongoing presence of Jesus, who is absent, through the presence within and among them of the Paraclete. ■

REFLECT

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? All of us would, no doubt, answer such a question with a resounding Yes! We believe in the third person of the Blessed Trinity. Each time we recite the Creed, we say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit". But if someone asks us if we believe in the Holy Spirit as something (or someone) real in our everyday lives, our reply might be rather less certain. And if the question were put in such a way that we had to consider the Spirit as the ongoing presence of Jesus in our lives as individual disciples and in the community

of the Church, the people of God, then we might have to ask for a little time to consider an angle which we might well not have thought of properly.

The Gospel of John may well appear attractive and spiritual, but it is no less demanding on our beliefs. It challenges our religious outlook in a way that the Synoptic Gospels perhaps do not. It emphasises our personal relationship with Jesus and does not allow us the escape route of activism, where we could think that being a disciple is primarily a matter of doing, of performing good

SAY

Anybody who loves me
will be loved by my Father
(John 14:21)

LEARN

The Paraclete/Advocate is John's name for the Holy Spirit.

The handing over of the Spirit is the final act in the hour of Jesus' glorification.

The Paraclete continues Jesus' revealing presence and work in the world.

DO

Think about the penance you decided to practise during Lent: did it bring you closer to Jesus? If it proved to be an endurance test, then consider what might be more beneficial to you spiritually.

works of one sort or another, or of observing certain moral norms. Jesus promises another Advocate, another Paraclete, who will perpetuate Jesus' presence in the world. The Paraclete will unfold to later generations the riches of Jesus' teaching. If we believe, love and keep Jesus' commandments, then we will experience the presence of the absent Jesus through the presence of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. Do you believe this? Does it seem too good to be true? Or are you perhaps afraid of the consequences for your daily life? Would that bring Jesus rather too close? ■