

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Within your will, O Lord, all things are established,
and there is none that can resist your will.
For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth,
and all that is held within the circle of heaven;
you are the Lord of all.

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 in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those
who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.
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 Genesis 2:18-24

A reading from the book of Genesis.
The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate." So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed:

"This at last is bone from my bones,
and flesh from my flesh!
This is to be called woman
for this was taken from man."

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 127

Response:

May the Lord bless us
all the days of our life.

- O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper. (R.)
- Your wife will be like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table. (R.)
- Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord.
May the Lord bless you from Zion
in a happy Jerusalem
all the days of your life!
May you see your children's children.
On Israel, peace! (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 2:9-11

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

We see in Jesus one who was for a short while made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and splendour because he submitted to death; by God's grace he had to experience death for all mankind.

As it was his purpose to bring a great many of his sons into glory, it was appropriate that God, for whom everything exists and through whom everything exists, should make perfect, through suffering, the leader who would take them to their salvation. For the one who sanctifies, and the ones who are sanctified, are of the same stock; that is why he openly calls them brothers.

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 Mark 10:2-16

(For shorter form, read between > <)

> A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" "Moses allowed us" they said, "to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce." Then Jesus said to them, "It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide." Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, "The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too." <

People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little

children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

> 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

Accept, O Lord, we pray,
the sacrifices instituted by your commands
and, through the sacred mysteries,
which we celebrate with dutiful service,
graciously complete the sanctifying work
by which you are pleased to redeem us.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord is good to those who hope in him,
to the soul that seeks him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us, almighty God,
that we may be refreshed and nourished
by the Sacrament which we have received,
so as to be transformed into what we
consume.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD

Today, we have first a confrontation between some Pharisees and Jesus over the question of divorce. Mark tells us that "they were testing him".

Divorce was common in the Jewish world of the time, and there were different schools of thought as to the reason why a man – and it would be a man – could divorce his wife. For once, Jesus sides with the stricter interpretation of the Law and describes the concession in the teaching of Deuteronomy as due to "hardness of heart", closing one's understanding and emotions to the truth. He bases his view on the divine plan set out in Genesis as the ideal for marriage, one flesh in a permanent union.

The second section of the reading is one of the very few examples from the Bible or the wider literature of the time which concentrate on children: young people, from infants to the age of twelve, were not regarded as persons in their own right. Jesus, on the other hand, takes a positive interest in them, becoming "indignant" when the disciples, for reasons we are not given, try to prevent them being brought to him. Once again, Mark shows the disciples in a negative light, not understanding that the kingdom is a gift, or who can receive it. ■

REFLECT

The question of divorce – or more accurately, of the remarriage of divorced persons – is one of the most vexing problems in the Church today. But it is nothing new: Jesus said, according to Mark, that divorce is not possible; however, Paul and Matthew give exceptions to this blanket prohibition. Jesus puts forward the ideal of marriage as a permanent union which the husband ("no man") is not entitled to break. It is only fair to say that the concerns we may have today about a person's suitability to enter into marriage from a psychological point of view have only emerged in recent years. Whereas marriage was spoken of in the past in terms of a legal contract, it is now presented in the biblical language of a covenant, the sacred relationship between God and Israel, between Christ and the Church: a high ideal indeed, one which requires commitment and sacrifice by the partners involved. How to deal with people whose marriages have failed is an urgent pastoral problem, but as we can see from the New Testament scriptures, one which the disciples of Jesus have had to wrestle with from the beginning. It is for the community to find the answer.

The second section of the Gospel reading presents Jesus paying attention to figures who have no legal standing at all, who are totally dependent on others and receive everything as a gift, as they have no rights. Jesus is angry with his obtuse disciples who try to prevent the children reaching him: when they do, he hugs them, transfers power to them by laying on his hands and calling down God's blessing upon them. Might not divorced and remarried persons today be represented by those children? ■

SAY

"Let the little children come to me... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."
(see Mark 10:14)

LEARN

There was no one official interpretation of the Jewish Law: there was a wide range of opinions.

At the time of Jesus, the two most influential rabbis were Shammai (strict) and Hillel (milder).

Jesus' approach is generally similar to that of Hillel, except for his teaching on divorce, which is nearer to that of Shammai.

DO

When you go forward to receive Holy Communion, remember that it is a gift, not a reward.



10 OCTOBER 2021 Sunday Message 28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B • Psalter Week 4

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But with you is found forgiveness,
O God of Israel.

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

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,
at all times go before us and follow after
and make us always determined
to carry out good works.
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 Wisdom 7:7-11

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

I prayed, and understanding was given me;
I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came
to me.

I esteemed her more than sceptres and
thrones;
compared with her, I held riches as nothing.
I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer,
for compared with her, all gold is a pinch of
sand,

and beside her silver ranks as mud.
I loved her more than health or beauty,
preferred her to the light,
since her radiance never sleeps.
In her company all good things came to me,
at her hands riches not to be numbered.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 89

Response:

Fill us with your love that we may rejoice.

1. 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.)
2. In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Give us joy to balance our affliction
for the years when we knew misfortune.
(R.)

3. Show forth your work to your servants;
let your glory shine on their children.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 4:12-13

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The word of God is something alive and
active: it cuts like any double-edged sword
but more finely: it can slip through the place
where the soul is divided from the spirit,
or joints from the marrow; it can judge the
secret emotions and thoughts. No created
thing can hide from him; everything is
uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to
whom we must give account of ourselves.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 10:17-30

(For shorter form, read between > <)

> A reading from the holy Gospel according
to Mark.

Jesus was setting out on a journey when
a man ran up, knelt before him and put
this question to him, "Good master, what
must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said
to him, "Why do you call me good? No
one is good but God alone. You know the
commandments: You must not kill; You must
not commit adultery; You must not steal; You
must not bring false witness; You must not
defraud; Honour your father and mother."
And he said to him, "Master, I have kept all
these from my earliest days." Jesus looked
steadily at him and loved him, and he said,
"There is one thing you lack. Go and sell
everything you own and give the money to
the poor, and you will have treasure in
heaven; then come, follow me." But his face
fell at these words and he went away sad,
for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his
disciples, "How hard it is for those who have
riches to enter the kingdom of God!" The
disciples were astounded by these words,
but Jesus insisted, "My children," he said to
them, "how hard it is to enter the kingdom of
God! It is easier for a camel to pass through
the eye of a needle than for a rich man to
enter the kingdom of God." They were more
astonished than ever. "In that case," they
said to one another "who can be saved?"
Jesus gazed at them. "For men" he said
"it is impossible, but not for God: because
everything is possible for God." <

Peter took this up. "What about us?"
he asked him. "We have left everything
and followed you." Jesus said, "I tell you
solemnly, there is no one who has left house,
brothers, sisters, father, children or land for
my sake and for the sake of the gospel who
will not be repaid a hundred times over,
houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children
and land – not without persecutions – now in
this present time and, in the world to come,
eternal life."

> 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

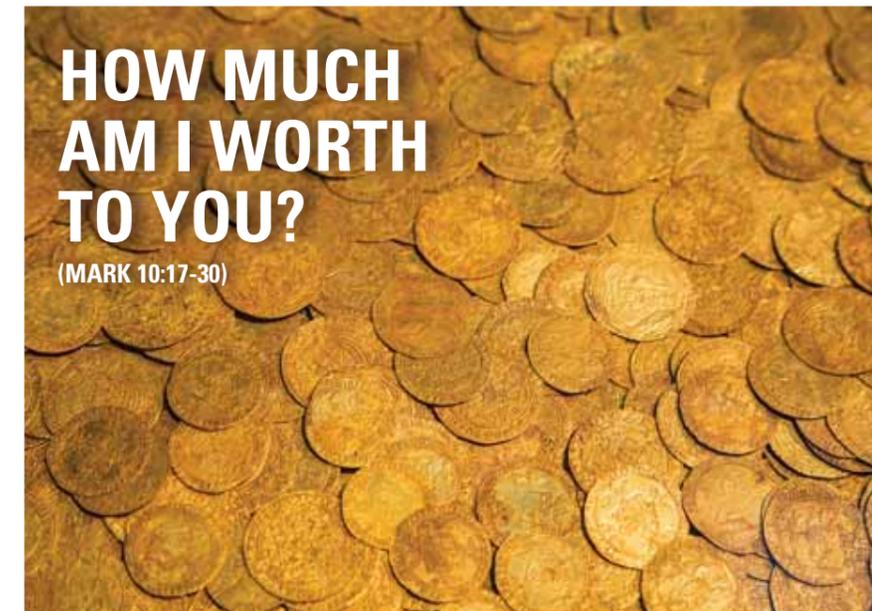
Accept, O Lord, the prayers of your faithful
with the sacrificial offerings,
that, through these acts of devotedness,
we may pass over to the glory of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The rich suffer want and go hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no
blessing.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We entreat your majesty most humbly,
O Lord,
that, as you feed us with the nourishment
which comes from the most holy Body and
Blood of your Son,
so you may make us sharers of his divine
nature.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

THE WORD

Jesus sets out on the next stage of his journey to Jerusalem and Mark illustrates the cost of becoming a disciple by the arrival of an unnamed man, who asks about the requirements for eternal life.

He tells Jesus that he has faithfully kept the commandments, then Jesus invites him to come with him as his disciple. But the cost proves too high: it is only when he sadly declines the invitation that the evangelist reveals that he is a wealthy person.

This leads on to Jesus' teaching about riches as an obstacle to being a disciple, and to the disciples' fundamental question about being saved at all. They are then confronted with the idea of salvation as God's gift. A rich person may have ample opportunity to keep the commandments, but this is no advantage over those less fortunate.

Peter then raises the question of those who have embraced voluntary poverty so that they can accompany Jesus as his disciples, unencumbered by possessions. Mark is the only Gospel writer in which we find Jesus' promise of a new family and new possessions, the hundredfold promised by hearing and putting into practice the word of God in the parable of the sower. The inclusion of the reference to persecutions would make perfect sense to Mark's community, as it would to many Christians in our time. ■

REFLECT

Mark does not have the same very negative attitude to wealth as we find in the writings of his fellow evangelist Luke, but, all the same, he does regard it as an obstacle to being a disciple of Jesus. It is hard to imagine that this demand of Jesus for a radical break with family and possessions which he describes is remotely possible for all but a small number of people. Many Christians will, understandably, conclude that this incident does not have anything to say to them.

But there must be some lesson which applies to all of us, and it might be summed up in the implicit question which Jesus is asking this prospective disciple: "How much am I worth to you?" The cost was too high for the person in the story, and Mark is challenging all those who read or hear his Gospel. Is there anything in our lives more important to us than Jesus? Having a family and the responsibilities that go with it is the way in which most Christians live their calling as disciples,

SAY

"We hold a treasure, Christ
the Lord, in earthen vessels."
(John B. Foley)

**LEARN**

Mark does not have a sermon on ethical behaviour as do Matthew (on the mount) and Luke (on the plain).

Jesus' teaching is given in response to actual situations.

Mark's community is familiar with persecution under the Roman emperor Nero.

DO

Take some money, coins or a note, in your hand: reflect on how much Jesus means to you.



so perhaps the idea of living as simply as we can would make more sense: not getting caught up in the relentless pursuit of things which are not really essential, and which can distract us from those which are truly important.

Many of the details in the Gospel stories do not apply to our time, but the teachings of Jesus which they present do. It is up to us to find appropriate ways to live them in our own lives. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

To you I call; for you will surely heed me,
 O God;
 turn your ear to me; hear my words.
 Guard me as the apple of your eye;
 in the shadow of your wings protect me.

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,
 grant that we may always conform our will
 to yours
 and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.
 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 Isaiah 53:10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
 The Lord has been pleased to crush his
 servant with suffering.
 If he offers his life in atonement,
 he shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life
 and through him what the Lord wishes will
 be done.
 His soul's anguish over
 he shall see the light and be content.
 By his sufferings shall my servant justify
 many,
 taking their faults on himself.
 The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 32

Response:
**May your love be upon us, O Lord
 as we place all our hope in you.**

- The word of the Lord is faithful
 and all his works to be trusted.
 The Lord loves justice and right
 and fills the earth with his love. (R.)
- The Lord looks on those who revere him,
 on those who hope in his love,
 to rescue their souls from death,
 to keep them alive in famine. (R.)

- Our soul is waiting for the Lord.
 The Lord is our help and our shield.
 May your love be upon us, O Lord,
 as we place all our hope in you. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 4:14-16

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the
 supreme high priest who has gone through
 to the highest heaven, we must never let
 go of the faith that we have professed. For
 it is not as if we had a high priest who was
 incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us;
 but we have one who has been tempted in
 every way that we are, though he is without
 sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching
 the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy
 from him and find grace when we are in need
 of help.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
 I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the
 Lord;
 No one can come to the Father except
 through me.
 Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 10:35-45

(For shorter form, read between > <)

> A reading from the holy Gospel according
 to Mark. <

James and John, the sons of Zebedee,
 approached Jesus. "Master," they said to
 him, "we want you to do us a favour." He
 said to them, "What is it you want me to do
 for you?" They said to him, "Allow us to sit
 one at your right hand and the other at your
 left in your glory." "You do not know what
 you are asking" Jesus said to them. "Can
 you drink the cup that I must drink, or be
 baptised with the baptism with which I must
 be baptised?" They replied, "We can." Jesus
 said to them, "The cup that I must drink you
 shall drink, and with the baptism with which
 I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but
 as for seats at my right hand or my left, these
 are not mine to grant; they belong to those to
 whom they have been allotted."

When the other ten heard this they began
 to feel indignant with James and John, so
 > Jesus called them to him and said to them,
 "You know that among the pagans their so-
 called rulers lord it over them, and their great
 men make their authority felt. This is not to
 happen among you. No; anyone who wants
 to become great among you must be your
 servant, and anyone who wants to be first
 among you must be slave to all. For the Son
 of Man himself did not come to be served but
 to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for
 many."

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

Grant us, Lord, we pray,
 a sincere respect for your gifts,
 that, through the purifying action of your
 grace,
 we may be cleansed by the very mysteries
 we serve.
 Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, the eyes of the Lord
 are on those who fear him,
 who hope in his merciful love,
 to rescue their souls from death,
 to keep them alive in famine.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
 that, benefiting from participation in heavenly
 things,
 we may be helped by what you give in this
 present age
 and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.
 Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD

Statues on the façade of St Peter's Basilica in Rome

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR!

(MARK 10:35-45)

We come to the end of Jesus' teaching during the journey to Jerusalem.
 Once again, the disciples, this time James and John, misunderstand what the
 kingdom is all about.

They ask Jesus for places of honour, only to be told that, although they may share in
 Jesus' cup, their request for seats is not in Jesus' gift to grant. The indignant reaction of
 the other ten provides another opportunity for Jesus to spell out clearly that the kingdom
 of God is not in any way like human societies and their systems of privilege: rather, it is
 one of service, and the leader is to be more like a slave than a king or autocratic ruler.
 It is not giving the disciples – or anyone else, for that matter – permission to "lord it
 over" others.

Jesus presents the model of leadership as that of the Son of Man: this is a title often
 associated with the passion. The expression "a ransom for many" recalls the "Suffering
 Servant" figure in Isaiah and presents Jesus' ultimate self-giving in terms of redeeming
 others, giving a deeper meaning to the forthcoming events in Jerusalem. ■

LEARN

"The cup" which Jesus mentions is the
 metaphorical cup of suffering, which will
 feature in the scene in Gethsemane.

Mark adds the phrase "and to give his life as
 a ransom for many" to this third prediction
 of the passion.

This explains Jesus' death in the context of
 the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah.

DO

Pick up or look at a cup: think about Jesus'
 teaching that Christian community is all
 about service, not power or control.

**REFLECT**

The prophets of Israel were deeply
 suspicious of organised religion.
 Their problem with it was not that
 it was not working properly: for them,
 it was rather that it was working only
 too well. Engaging in public worship
 could give people the sense that they
 had fulfilled their religious duties and
 that what happened in the Temple had
 little or nothing to do with the way in
 which they conducted their social or
 business affairs. Ritual could function
 as a placebo, making people feel good
 about themselves while their attitudes
 and behaviour were violently clashing
 with the values put forward by their
 religion. By Jesus' time, the Jerusalem
 Temple priests had become chiefly
 political figures, concerned with their
 power and position.

The Church exists within historical
 settings and develops its way of life
 within different societies throughout
 the world. We can see from the
 history of Europe how the Church
 became a very powerful force: political
 power and influence can be very
 seductive, tempting leaders (at every
 level) towards the mistaken notion
 of leadership shown by James and
 John. Jesus' answer to their request
 for seats of honour was the offer of
 the cup of suffering: the individuals
 who were actually given places on
 Jesus' right and left hand were the two
 thieves who were crucified with him.
 We must indeed be careful about what
 we wish for.

It is easy to think that Jesus' teaching
 applies to bishops, priests and the
 like, but even at local level, among
 parishioners, there is a fine line
 between service and control.
 Individuals can carve out little
 kingdoms for themselves, imagining
 that their motives are pure and
 selfless, but this can, in fact, be a
 subtle way of satisfying a desire for
 power and position over others. The
 teachings of Jesus apply to all of us,
 irrespective of our particular calling. ■

SAY

"This is our God,
 the Servant King."

(Graham Kendrick)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice;
turn to the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face.

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,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.
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 Jeremiah 31:7-9

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

The Lord says this:

Shout with joy for Jacob!
Hail the chief of nations!
Proclaim! Praise! Shout!
"The Lord has saved his people,
the remnant of Israel!"
See, I will bring them back
from the land of the North
and gather them from the far ends of earth;
all of them: the blind and the lame,
women with child, women in labour:
a great company returning here.
They had left in tears,
I will comfort them as I lead them back;
I will guide them to streams of water,
by a smooth path where they will not
stumble.
For I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my first-born son.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 125

Response:

**What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad.**

- When the Lord delivered Zion from
bondage,
it seemed like a dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs. (R.)

- The heathens themselves said: "What
marvels
the Lord worked for them!"
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad. (R.)

- Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. (R.)

- They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full of
song,
carrying their sheaves. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 5:1-6

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Every high priest has been taken out of
mankind and is appointed to act for men in
their relations with God, to offer gifts and
sacrifices for sins; and so he can sympathise
with those who are ignorant or uncertain
because he too lives in the limitations of
weakness. That is why he has to make sin
offerings for himself as well as for the people.
No one takes this honour on himself, but
each one is called by God, as Aaron was. Nor
did Christ give himself the glory of becoming
high priest, but he had it from the one who
said to him: You are my son, today I have
become your father, and in another text: You
are a priest of the order of Melchizedek, and
for ever.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**I am the light of the world, says the Lord,
anyone who follows me
will have the light of life.**

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 10:46-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

As Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a
large crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of
Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the
side of the road. When he heard that it was
Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and to
say, "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me."
And many of them scolded him and told
him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all
the louder, "Son of David, have pity on me."
Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So
they called the blind man. "Courage," they
said, "get up; he is calling you." So throwing
off his cloak, he jumped up and went to
Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, "What do you want
me to do for you?" "Rabbuni," the blind
man said to him, "Master, let me see again."
Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has saved
you." And immediately his sight returned and
he followed him along the road.

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

Look, we pray, O Lord,
on the offerings we make to your majesty,
that whatever is done by us in your service
may be directed above all to your glory.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**We will ring out our joy at your saving help
and exult in the name of our God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray,
perfect in us what lies within them,
that what we now celebrate in signs
we may one day possess in truth.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

I complained about my eyesight, my
parents would say, "You're lucky you're not
blind." My upbringing gave me a sense of
confidence even if we didn't have much.

Roger McGough

THE WORD

As with all the stories about Jesus healing a person, there is a deeper meaning to the episode of Bartimaeus at Jericho.

The mention of this oasis city tells us that Jesus is approaching his final destination, Jerusalem. Bartimaeus may well have lost his physical power of seeing, but he has insight into Jesus: other people refer to "Jesus of Nazareth", but the beggar recognises him as "Son of David" and calls out "have mercy on me" (not "pity", as our version renders it); this verb is only used of God, so he understands Jesus to be the bringer of God's mercy. When Jesus tells them to call Bartimaeus, the others tell him, "Arise; he is calling you." Mark uses the verb which has overtones of the resurrection (rather than simply "Get up"), which finds an echo in Jesus' final remark to him that "your faith has saved you". He receives more than the restoration of his ability to see physically: he now becomes a disciple of Jesus, following him "along the road", the way to Jerusalem, which for Mark represents the place where Jesus is finally rejected and put to death.

Thus the Bartimaeus story presents a lesson in discipleship: a personal encounter with Jesus leads to a radical decision to follow Jesus along the way which leads to the cross, a theme which runs through the whole of Mark's Gospel narrative. ■

REFLECT

We find the use of sight as a metaphor for faith in several places in the four Gospel versions. In this case, it is the recovery of sight which is at the centre of the meeting between Jesus and Bartimaeus. People who have had an operation to remove cataracts from their eyes often say what a difference it has made, not just to their sight but to their whole lives. Even a change of prescription to a person's spectacles can have a dramatic effect. Perhaps the latter might be something that a greater number of

us can relate to: we might have put off going to the optician for some reason or another and so we get used to our vision becoming weaker without realising it. When eventually we do go and it is apparent that new lenses will make all the difference, we wonder why we did not go for a test long before.

Imagine for a moment that Bartimaeus did not pay attention to what was happening around him: he would have missed the opportunity to encounter Jesus and not just to recover his sight,

SAY

**"Jesus, Son of David, have
mercy on me!"**
(Mark 10:48)

LEARN

Jericho is an oasis in the Judaeen desert, 15 miles north-east of Jerusalem.

The city was a popular winter resort for wealthy citizens of Jerusalem, which was cold and windy at that time of the year.

Bar is the Aramaic word for "son": the Hebrew equivalent is *ben*.

DO

If you wear spectacles, when you clean them, think of the story of Bartimaeus and your own spiritual way of looking at life. If you don't wear glasses, study a window and think about your spiritual sight in the same way.



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,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 6:2-6

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.
Moses said to the people: "If you fear the
Lord your God all the days of your life and
if you keep all his laws and commandments
which I lay on you, you will have a long life,
you and your son and your grandson. Listen
then, Israel, keep and observe what will make
you prosper and give you great increase, as
the Lord God of your fathers has promised
you, giving you a land where milk and honey
flow.

"Listen, Israel: The Lord our God is the one
Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with
all your heart, with all your soul, with all your
strength. Let these words I urge on you today
be written on your heart."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 17

Response:

I love you, Lord, my strength.

1. I love you, Lord, my strength,
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.
My God is the rock where I take refuge;
my shield, my mighty help, my
stronghold.
The Lord is worthy of all praise:
when I call I am saved from my foes. (R.)

2. Long life to the Lord, my rock!
Praised be the God who saves me.
He has given great victories to his king
and shown his love for his anointed. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 7:23-28

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

There used to be a great number of priests
under the former covenant, because death
put an end to each one of them; but this
one, Christ, because he remains for ever, can
never lose his priesthood. It follows then,
that his power to save is utterly certain, since
he is living for ever to intercede for all who
come to God through him.

To suit us, the ideal high priest would have
to be holy, innocent and uncontaminated,
beyond the influence of sinners, and raised
up above the heavens; one who would not
need to offer sacrifices every day, as the
other high priests do for their own sins and
then for those of the people, because he has
done this once and for all by offering himself.
The Law appoints high priests who are men
subject to weakness; but the promise on
oath, which came after the Law, appointed
the Son who is made perfect for ever.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 12:28-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

One of the scribes came up to Jesus and
put a question to him, "Which is the first
of all the commandments?" Jesus replied,
"This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our
God is the one Lord, and you must love the
Lord your God with all your heart, with all
your soul, with all your mind and with all
your strength. The second is this: You must
love your neighbour as yourself. There is
no commandment greater than these." The
scribe said to him, "Well spoken, Master;
what you have said is true: that he is one
and there is no other. To love him with all
your heart, with all your understanding
and strength and to love your neighbour as
yourself, this is far more important than any
holocaust or sacrifice." Jesus, seeing how
wisely he had spoken, said, "You are not far
from the kingdom of God." And after that no
one dared to question him any more.

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.

Unless we look at a person and see the
beauty that is in them, we can contribute
nothing to them. One does not help a person
by discerning what is wrong, what is ugly,
what is distorted. Christ looked at everyone
he met, at the prostitute, at the thief, and
saw the beauty hidden there. Perhaps it
was distorted, perhaps damaged, but it was
beauty none the less, and what he did was to
call out this beauty.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

THE WORD**A FRIENDLY EXCHANGE**

(MARK 12:28-34)

Jesus has reached and entered Jerusalem. This is the lair of his opponents, the chief priests, elders and scribes whom he has mentioned as responsible for what will happen to him in the Holy City.

It is therefore perhaps a little surprising that, in this setting, we hear of a perfectly friendly and mutually respectful exchange between Jesus and one of the scribes. There is no hint of hostility or Jesus being put on the spot (as we find in Matthew and Luke's versions of the incident). The scribe's question would be a normal one put to any teacher of the Law. The scholar agrees with Jesus' interpretation and Jesus praises him for his perceptive attitude. Hebrew thought does not divide the person into body and soul but sees the human being as a whole, so the mention of loving with one's "heart, soul, mind and strength" is emphasising the complete dedication of the individual to God. The scribe's approving repetition of Jesus' reply adds the comment that to love God and one's neighbour is "far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice", a teaching which we find in the Hebrew Bible. This episode gives us a unique glimpse into Jesus, the orthodox Jewish rabbi, in friendly discussion with an advanced student on a point of theology, on which they are both of one mind. Jesus' final remark that his companion is "not far from the kingdom of God" reminds us that the teaching of Jesus is summed up as "the kingdom of God is at hand" and, in a sense, present in Jesus. If the scribe puts into practice what he believes, then he will truly enter the kingdom. ■

REFLECT

One of the more worrying developments in recent times has been the dividing of society into hostile groups which seem unable to communicate with one another. It is true that throughout history people have demonised others different to themselves on the basis of language, culture, colour or religion. Sometimes a comment is made along the lines of "X is a ___", but a very nice person!" This can be said with a tone of pleasant surprise that X

has proved to be different from what the speaker expected. Some time ago, there were peace talks beginning between two groups, and everyone expected the discussions to be very difficult. What changed the atmosphere completely was that the participants brought their families with them and the respective children got on so well with each other that the adults began to see one another in a completely different light.

SAY

"This is what the Lord asks of you: act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God."
(Micah 6:8)

LEARN

The scribes were scholars who were very much part of the religious and political establishment in Jerusalem.

Other members were the chief priests and elders – not the Pharisees.

Loving one's neighbour as oneself means showing the same care and concern for the other's well-being as one takes care of one's own needs.

DO

Remember that loving your neighbour is not about emotions or feelings: it is about treating the other person properly and thoughtfully. Think about that during the coming week.



At the mention of the scribe, Mark's readers may well expect another unpleasant confrontation between Jesus and his critics, but this scholar turns out to be quite different from the usual stereotyped presentation. Perhaps this extract might warn us against making easy assumptions about any other person or group. The other characters in the story may well have gone away thinking, "He was a scribe – but actually a very nice person!" ■

31 OCTOBER 2021 Sunday Message ALL SAINTS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let us all rejoice in the Lord,
as we celebrate the feast day in honour of all
the Saints,
at whose festival 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,
by whose gift we venerate in one celebration
the merits of all the Saints,
bestow on us, we pray,
through the prayers of so many intercessors,
an abundance of the reconciliation with you
for which we earnestly long.
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 *Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14*

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse.
I, John, saw another angel rising where the
sun rises, carrying the seal of the living God;
he called in a powerful voice to the four
angels whose duty was to devastate land and
sea, "Wait before you do any damage on land
or at sea or to the trees, until we have put the
seal on the foreheads of the servants of our
God." Then I heard how many were sealed:
a hundred and forty-four thousand, out of all
the tribes of Israel.

After that I saw a huge number, impossible
to count, of people from every nation, race,
tribe and language; they were standing in
front of the throne and in front of the Lamb,
dressed in white robes and holding palms in
their hands. They shouted aloud, "Victory to
our God, who sits on the throne, and to the
Lamb!" And all the angels who were standing
in a circle round the throne, surrounding
the elders and the four animals, prostrated
themselves before the throne, and touched
the ground with their foreheads, worshipping
God with these words, "Amen. Praise and
glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and
honour and power and strength to our God
for ever and ever. Amen."

One of the elders then spoke, and asked
me, "Do you know who these people are,

dressed in white robes, and where they have
come from?" I answered him, "You can tell
me, my lord." Then he said, "These are the
people who have been through the great
persecution, and they have washed their
robes white again in the blood of the Lamb."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 23

Response:

Such are the men who seek your face,
O Lord.

- The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm. (R.)
- Who shall climb the mountain of the
Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things. (R.)
- He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 John 3:1-3

A reading from the first letter of St John.

Think of the love that the Father has lavished
on us,
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.
Because the world refused to acknowledge
him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.
My dear people, we are already the children
of God
but what we are to be in the future has not
yet been revealed;
all we know is, that when it is revealed
we shall be like him
because we shall see him as he really is.
Surely everyone who entertains this hope
must purify himself, must try to be as pure
as Christ.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Come to me, all you who labour and are
overburdened,
and I will give you rest, says the Lord.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill.
There he sat down and was joined by his
disciples. Then he began to speak. This is
what he taught them:

"How happy are the poor in spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle:
they shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn:
they shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for what
is right:
they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart:
they shall see God.
Happy the peacemakers:
they shall be called sons of God.
Happy those who are persecuted in the
cause of right:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Happy are you when people abuse you
and persecute you and speak all kinds of
calumny against you on my account. Rejoice
and be glad, for your reward will be great in
heaven."

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 these offerings we bring in honour of all
the Saints
be pleasing to you, O Lord,
and grant that, just as we believe the Saints
to be already assured of immortality,
so we may experience their concern for our
salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall
see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the
sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we adore you, O God, who alone are holy
and wonderful in all your Saints,
we implore your grace,
so that, coming to perfect holiness in the
fullness of your love,
we may pass from this pilgrim table
to the banquet of our heavenly homeland.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD

Stained glass window in Cologne Cathedral depicting the four evangelists: St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John

The background to Matthew's version of the Good News is the most explicitly Jewish of the four Gospel narratives.

When he presents Jesus going up the mountain (rather than the "hill"), he is showing Jesus in the same light as Moses at Sinai, where Moses received the Law, the Torah, from God. Jesus sits down, this being the posture of a teacher addressing students or disciples. He does not give a new law so much as new teaching (which is the root meaning of Torah). The long sermon begins with a list of attitudes or dispositions which his disciples should adopt: the Eight Beatitudes are thus the equivalent of the Ten Commandments; they are positive in tone, in contrast with most of the Mosaic instructions which begin, "You shall not..." The one set of teaching is not proposed in opposition to the other; rather, for Matthew, Jesus' doctrine represents the true inner core of the Torah of Sinai. If people are properly disposed, there is no need for law: for example, if a person is a peacemaker, the commandment against killing is not necessary.

The timing of the promised reward for living out the Beatitudes is interesting: it will come at the end of time, in the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom is mentioned at the beginning and the end of this section, and the Beatitudes in between refer to the final judgement, when the kingdom will be finally established in its perfect form. ■

REFLECT

As we celebrate the feast of All Saints, we remember all those people, some of whom we have known, members of our families, friends and fellow parishioners who have gone before us and who tried their best to live up to the standards Jesus proposed for his disciples. They are part of the "great cloud of witnesses on every side of us", those anonymous saints who are now with God in glory, as well as those who have been officially recognised by the Church.

Each time we recite the Apostles' Creed, we say "I believe in... the communion of saints". By that we mean that we are somehow united in some way with those who have gone before us. As it

says in the first Preface of the Mass for the Dead, "for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended". Just as Jesus was transformed through his death and resurrection, so we believe that all those who die and rise with him sacramentally in baptism share in his risen life, both now and in eternity. The Beatitudes may seem like impossible ideals, but all that the Lord expects of us is that we do our best to live up to them and to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in our efforts. That is why the Eucharist is so important: receiving Holy Communion is not a reward for being a good Christian, but a powerful aid to becoming one. In that, we have the witness of those anonymous saints whom we commemorate today. ■

SAY

Thank you, Lord, for all the saints I have known in my life.

DO

Recite quietly the Apostles' Creed: think about the various phrases, especially "I believe in... the communion of saints".

LEARN

Matthew is depicting Jesus as the new Moses: Moses represents the Law given on Sinai.

The Hebrew word translated often as "Law" is *Torah*: its meaning is broader than legal rules and basically means "teaching" or "instruction".

The collection of the first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – is known as *Torah*.

