

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Let my prayer come into your presence.  
Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

**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,  
graciously keep from us all adversity,  
so that, unhindered in mind and body alike,  
we may pursue in freedom of heart  
the things that are yours.  
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** 1 Kings 17:10-16

A reading from the first book of the Kings.  
Elijah the Prophet went off to Sidon. And when he reached the city gate, there was a widow gathering sticks; addressing her he said, "Please bring a little water in a vessel for me to drink." She was setting off to bring it when he called after her. "Please" he said, "bring me a scrap of bread in your hand." "As the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I have no baked bread, but only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug; I am just gathering a stick or two to go and prepare this for myself and my son to eat, and then we shall die." But Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid, go and do as you have said; but first make a little scone of it for me and bring it to me, and then make some for yourself and for your son. For thus the Lord speaks, the God of Israel:

'Jar of meal shall not be spent,  
jug of oil shall not be emptied,  
before the day when the Lord sends  
rain on the face of the earth.'

The woman went and did as Elijah told her and they ate the food, she, himself and her son. The jar of meal was not spent nor the jug of oil emptied, just as the Lord had foretold through Elijah.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

Psalm 145

Response:

**My soul, give praise to the Lord.**  
or  
**Alleluia!**

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. (R.)
2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down. It is the Lord who loves the just, the Lord who protects the stranger. (R.)
3. The Lord upholds the widow and orphan but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Hebrews 9:24-28

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

It is not as though Christ had entered a man-made sanctuary which was only modelled on the real one; but it was heaven itself, so that he could appear in the actual presence of God on our behalf. And he does not have to offer himself again and again, like the high priest going into the sanctuary year after year with the blood that is not his own, or else he would have had to suffer over and over again since the world began. Instead of that, he has made his appearance once and for all, now at the end of the last age, to do away with sin by sacrificing himself. Since men only die once, and after that comes judgement, so Christ, too, offers himself only once to take the faults of many on himself, and when he appears a second time, it will not be to deal with sin but to reward with salvation those who are waiting for him.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**  
**Even if you have to die, says the Lord,**  
**keep faithful, and I will give you**  
**the crown of life.**  
**Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL**

Mark 12:38-44

(For shorter form, read between > <)

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

In his teaching Jesus said, "Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; these are the men who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive."

> He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they

had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on."

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**

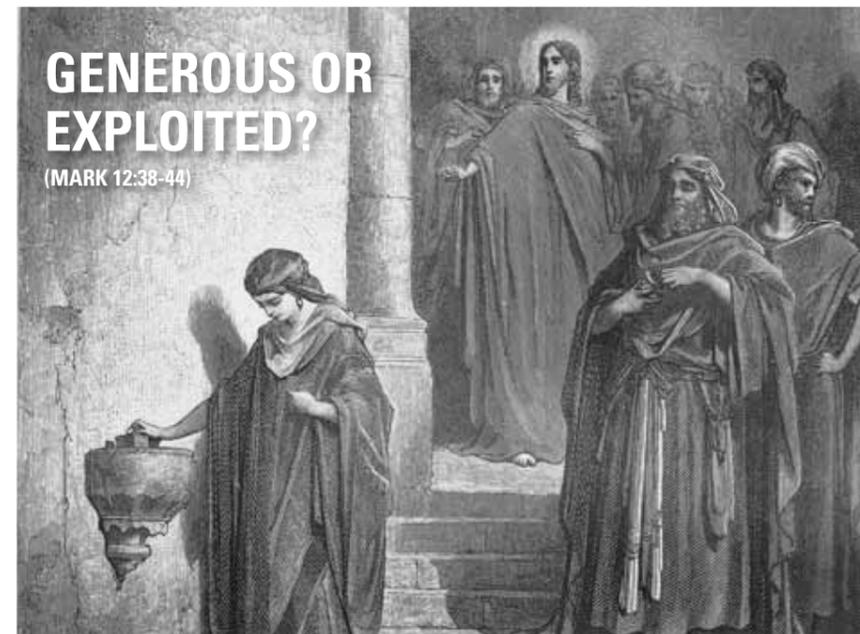
Look with favour, we pray, O Lord,  
upon the sacrificial gifts offered here,  
that, celebrating in mystery the Passion of  
your Son,  
we may honour it with loving devotion.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I**  
**shall want.**  
**Fresh and green are the pastures where he**  
**gives me repose,**  
**near restful waters he leads me.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Nourished by this sacred gift, O Lord,  
we give you thanks and beseech your mercy,  
that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit,  
the grace of integrity may endure  
in those your heavenly power has entered.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**THE WORD**

"The Widow's Mite" by Gustave Dore c. 1880

Mark presents us with portraits of two different kinds of people in our Gospel passage today and may well be hinting at the dangers inherent in institutional or organised religion.

The scene is the Temple in Jerusalem, the context a consideration about the legal and theological authorities known as the scribes. We have seen Jesus interacting positively with a member of this group, but now he takes a more negative view of some of the other scribes, who indulge in self-promoting behaviour. As well as attracting attention by their rather flamboyant dress and seeking places of honour in the synagogue and at banquets, they appear to abuse their position as lawyers in charge of the estate of widows: such women were traditionally regarded as being in need of special protection, given their vulnerable situation in the society of the day. These men are accused of exploiting their position of trust for monetary gain, which would be condemned by the prophets of Israel.

The mention of widows suggests that the second section should be considered along with the first. This is the episode often referred to as "the widow's mite", the portrait of the woman who had little, but gave it all for the upkeep of the Temple, the House of God. The usual interpretation is that Jesus commends her action as an outstanding example of generosity; but could it be that he is deploring a situation whereby she feels compelled to put the apparent requirements of the Temple (and its staff) in front of her own very pressing needs? ■

**REFLECT**

One problem with the written word is that we cannot know for certain the tone of voice in which a character is speaking. It may be obvious from the context, but in cases such as our Gospel reading today, it may well not be so clear, and it can make all the difference. A great danger with organised religion is that it requires money to function. Church buildings need to be maintained, clergy need to be supported; but reform movements throughout the history of the

Church indicate that keeping the proper balance in such matters can be difficult.

An area in church life which causes a certain amount of unease today is that of Mass stipends and stole fees. Such payments are officially voluntary offerings. The law of the Church is very clear that any appearance of simony is to be avoided (simony being the intent to deal commercially in sacred things). This is a delicate area, and one which perhaps

**LEARN**

Scribes were interpreters of the Law and could act for others in legal matters.

Widows, orphans and poor people were especially vulnerable members of society in biblical times.

The collection boxes in the Temple were shaped like trumpets and the sound made by coins thrown in revealed the metal – and therefore the value – of the person's offering.

**DO**

Ask yourself whether Jesus is commending or deploring the widow's action. Discuss with others whether you think Mass offerings and stole fees are appropriate today and what might be a better alternative.

**SAY**

"God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot  
change, courage to change  
the things I can, and wisdom  
to know the difference."  
(Reinhold Niebuhr)

needs to be considered by the community as a whole. Is it a good thing that a priest should be more or less dependent on offerings for sacramental services? How does this practice affect those involved? If Jesus is criticising the practice of his day, the fact that it occurs in the Gospel should make us ask how it applies to us now. That the question is difficult means that we should be asking it. ■

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction.  
You will call upon me, and I will answer you, and I will lead back your captives from every place.

**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 us, we pray, O Lord our God, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy the author of all that is good. 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**

Daniel 12:1-3

A reading from the prophet Daniel.

“At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity.”

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 15

Response:

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

- O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; it is you yourself who are my prize. I keep the Lord ever in my sight: since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. (R.)

- And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; even my body shall rest in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead, nor let your beloved know decay. (R.)
- You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, at your right hand happiness for ever. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

All the priests stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking sins away. Christ, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place for ever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting until his enemies are made into a footstool for him. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Stay awake and stand ready, because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming. Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Mark 13:24-32

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus said to his disciples: “In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven. “Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you, when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.”

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, O Lord, we pray, that what we offer in the sight of your majesty may obtain for us the grace of being devoted to you and gain us the prize of everlasting happiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

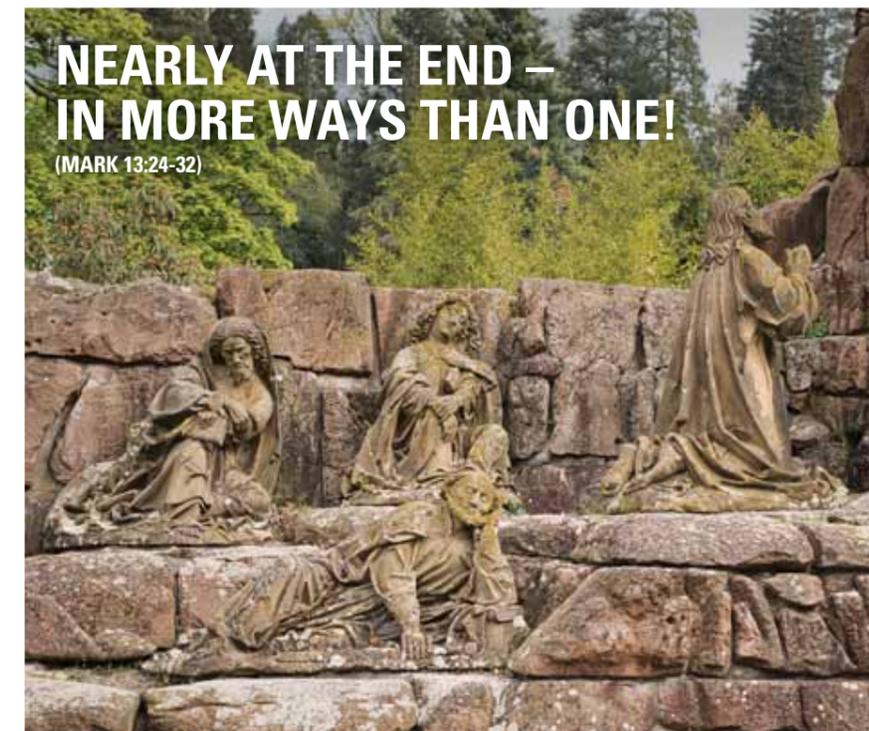
To be near God is my happiness, to place my hope in God the Lord.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We have partaken of the gifts of this sacred mystery, humbly imploring, O Lord, that what your Son commanded us to do in memory of him may bring us growth in charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

To regard the Mass as an obligation, a chore, and a boring one at that, to be done on a Sunday, is a hideous travesty of the truth. Mass may indeed be boring, and the dear priest's sermon an affliction to be patiently endured (or, of course, an intellectual treat to be discussed throughout the week), but we do not go to Mass for entertainment... To be taken to the self-offering of Jesus to the Father is what being a Catholic is about, it is what the Mass is about.

Sr Wendy Beckett

**THE WORD**

Sculpture in Baden-Baden, Germany of Jesus and his disciples on the Mount of Olives, late 15th century

In this, our last extract from the Gospel according to Mark in this Year B, we find Jesus and his disciples on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem from the east.

This site is associated with the arrival of “the Day of the Lord”, a term which we find in the context of the events surrounding the coming of the Lord – in Christian thought, the second coming of Christ in glory. The figure of the Son of Man, associated with final judgement, is one which comes from the book of Daniel, an example of apocalyptic writing from the Hebrew Bible. Mark's narrative about Jesus begins with his preaching that “the kingdom of God is close at hand”: here we have a vision of the arrival of that kingdom in its fullness with all the earthly and cosmic signs which will accompany it. The “Son of Man” depicted here is Jesus and the clouds are a symbol of the divine presence. This is the final, universal revealing of the kingdom, which Jesus has been proclaiming through his preaching and acts of power. The indication of the fig tree, an unusually seasonal plant in that area of evergreens, indicates springtime, Passover, and hints at the forthcoming events of Holy Week.

Mark counsels his community – and later readers – against being carried away with apocalyptic enthusiasm: they may well see signs similar to those which Jesus mentions, but they should keep in mind that only the Father knows when the kingdom will finally arrive. ■

**LEARN**

Apocalyptic writing arose in situations of persecution.

The title “Son of Man” comes from the book of Daniel: when used of Jesus, it suggests either judgement or the passion.

The fig tree indicates the seasons through its leaves and producing fruit, unlike many trees in the land of Israel, which are evergreens.

**REFLECT**

Each time we recite the Lord's Prayer, we say “Thy kingdom come”. It may be that we are not really praying for the final revealing of the kingdom – at least, not in our lifetime. We might even use a version of the prayer of St Augustine: “Thy kingdom come – but not just yet!” We find this tension in the Gospels, between the partial coming of God's will for human beings (the “already”) and the final establishing of the covenant union between God and God's people (the “not yet”).

Apocalyptic writing arose in a situation of persecution: the book of Daniel at a time when there was an attempt to impose pagan, Greek culture on the Jewish people; the book of Revelation (or the Apocalypse) during the Roman persecution of Christians. It looks forward to a time when God will (eventually) intervene to rescue those who have remained faithful through times of suffering. There are situations in the world today where these scriptures are particularly relevant.

One lesson that apocalyptic writing teaches us is that the kingdom is a gift. Being redeemed is a free gift, according to the apostle Paul: it may be that we have to co-operate in being saved, but in the end, it is a question of grace rather than merit. Sometimes we may think that if only we hit upon the right pastoral strategy or catechetical programme, all our problems as a parish or Church will be solved. Perhaps we might look to see where the kingdom is growing already and help to nurture it. ■

**DO**

As you celebrate the Eucharist, remember that it is the work of our redemption: keep that in mind as you go about your daily life during the week.

**SAY**

“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

(Lord's Prayer; see Matthew 6:10)

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

How worthy is the Lamb who was slain,  
to receive power and divinity,  
and wisdom and strength and honour.  
To him belong glory and power for ever and  
ever.

**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,  
whose will is to restore all things  
in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,  
grant, we pray,  
that the whole creation, set free from slavery,  
may render your majesty service  
and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.  
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**

Daniel 7:13-14

A reading from the prophet Daniel.  
I gazed into the visions of the night.  
And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven,  
one like a son of man.  
He came to the one of great age  
and was led into his presence.  
On him was conferred sovereignty,  
glory and kingship,  
and men of all peoples, nations and  
languages became his servants.  
His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty  
which shall never pass away,  
nor will his empire be destroyed.  
The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 92

Response:

The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed.

- The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed;  
the Lord has robed himself with might,  
he has girded himself with power. (R.)
- The world you made firm, not to be  
moved;  
your throne has stood firm from of old.  
From all eternity, O Lord, you are. (R.)

- Truly your decrees are to be trusted.  
Holiness is fitting to your house,  
O Lord, until the end of time. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Apocalypse 1:5-8

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse.  
Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the First-  
born from the dead, the Ruler of the kings of  
the earth. He loves us and has washed away  
our sins with his blood, and made us a line of  
kings, priests to serve his God and Father; to  
him, then, be glory and power for ever and  
ever. Amen. It is he who is coming on the  
clouds; everyone will see him, even those  
who pierced him, and all the races of the  
earth will mourn over him. This is the truth.  
Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega" says  
the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to  
come, the Almighty.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Blessings on him who comes in the name of  
the Lord!  
Blessings on the coming kingdom of our  
father David!  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

John 18:33-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
John.

"Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked.  
Jesus replied, "Do you ask this of your own  
accord, or have others spoken to you about  
me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? It is  
your own people and the chief priests who  
have handed you over to me: what have you  
done?" Jesus replied, "Mine is not a kingdom  
of this world; if my kingdom were of this  
world, my men would have fought to prevent  
my being surrendered to the Jews. But my  
kingdom is not of this kind." "So you are a  
king then?" said Pilate. "It is you who say it"  
answered Jesus. "Yes, I am a king. I was born  
for this, I came into the world for this: to bear  
witness to the truth; and all who are on the  
side of truth listen to my voice."

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**

As we offer you, O Lord, the sacrifice  
by which the human race is reconciled to you,  
we humbly pray  
that your Son himself may bestow on all  
nations  
the gifts of unity and peace.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

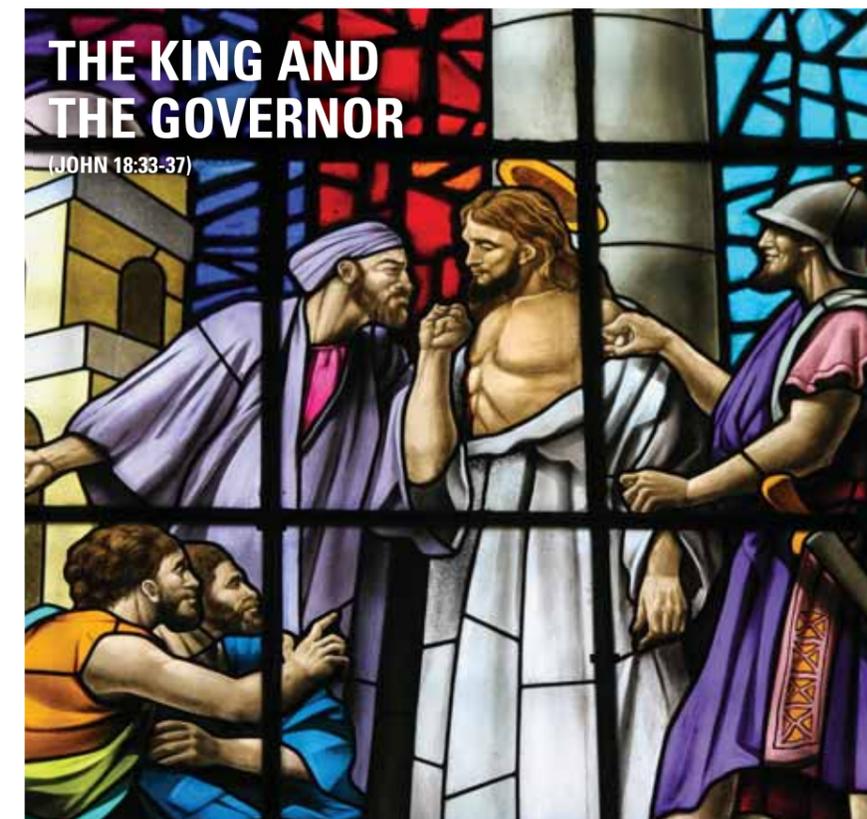
The Lord sits as King for ever.  
The Lord will bless his people with peace.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having received the food of immortality,  
we ask, O Lord,  
that, glorying in obedience  
to the commands of Christ, the King of the  
universe,  
we may live with him eternally in his  
heavenly Kingdom.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Truly a faithful friend is the medicine of life.  
Truly a faithful friend is a strong defence.  
For what will not a genuine friend perform?  
What pleasure will he not afford? What  
benefit? What security? Though you should  
name infinite treasures, none of them is  
comparable to a genuine friend.

St John Chrysostom



Stained glass window in the Santos Passos church in Guimaraes, Portugal, depicting Jesus  
accused before Pontius Pilate

Just as the feast of Christ the King is the climax of the Church's year, so the  
scene of Jesus' trial before Pilate can be understood, in some sense, as the  
climax of John's Gospel narrative.

The term "kingdom" has only appeared (twice) already in the Gospel according to John,  
during Jesus' nocturnal discussion with Nicodemus: there Jesus tells his visitor that  
unless a person is "born through water and the Spirit", they "cannot enter the kingdom  
of God". This theme returns in Jesus' final exchange before his crucifixion, during the  
trial before Pilate. Throughout the narrative, Jesus has been challenging people to decide  
about himself and the message he brings. The last person to be so confronted is the  
Roman governor, who dismisses Jesus' offer in the words which immediately follow  
today's reading, when he asks, "Truth? What is that?"

Jesus does not talk to Pilate about himself, but rather about the kingdom (or his kingship).  
It is not "of this world", but it is in the world in the community of disciples who have  
accepted Jesus and his teaching and ratified this publicly by being baptised. Jesus'  
explanation of his being a king is very like the example of the shepherd and the flock and  
"listening to his voice". His kingdom is one of authority rather than power. His exercising  
of this authority has been in making God known to the world and drawing all those who  
accept the truth into God's kingdom. It is when Jesus is lifted up on the cross, revealed as  
king and priest at the crucifixion, that he will draw all people to himself. ■

**SAY**

"This is our God, the Servant King: he calls us now to  
follow him." (Graham Kendrick)

**REFLECT**

The feast of Christ the King was  
instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI  
when nationalism was on the rise  
in Europe and societies were deeply  
marked by class divisions. True peace,  
he wrote, could only be found under  
the rule of Christ, the Universal King,  
the Prince of Peace.

The notion of kingship or queenship is  
a difficult one in this more democratic  
age. This can make our understanding  
of Christ as king problematic. Pilate  
got it right when he had a universal  
proclamation fastened to the cross of  
Jesus, which read "Jesus of Nazareth,  
King of the Jews". But Jesus' throne is  
a cross; his crown, one of thorns.

Although Jesus' kingdom (or kingship)  
does not originate from this world,  
it is present in the world. This might  
cause some people to think that  
the kingdom and the Church are  
the same thing: missionary work is  
sometimes understood as "spreading  
the kingdom". However, the kingdom  
is greater than the Church: wherever  
the values put forward in the Bible,  
the word of God, are being put  
into practice, we could say that the  
kingdom is present. ■

**LEARN**

The feast of Christ the King was instituted by  
Pope Pius XI in 1925.

This was a time of rising nationalism in  
many countries in Europe.

Pius said that although war had ceased,  
peace had not been established; he hoped  
that this feast would promote people's  
allegiance to Christ as Universal King and  
Prince of Peace.

**DO**

Make the Sign of the Cross with holy water  
and renew your baptismal promises to live  
as best you can as a true member of the  
community of Jesus' disciples.



**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.  
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.  
Nor let my enemies exult over me;  
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

**COLLECT**

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.  
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 33:14-16

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.  
See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:  
“In those days and at that time, I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David,  
who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.  
In those days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in confidence.  
And this is the name the city will be called: The Lord-our-integrity.”

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 24

Response:  
To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

- Lord, make me know your ways.  
Lord, teach me your paths.  
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me: for you are God my saviour. (R.)
- The Lord is good and upright.  
He shows the path to those who stray, he guides the humble in the right path; he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)
- His ways are faithfulness and love for those who keep his covenant and will. The Lord's friendship is for those who revere him;  
to them he reveals his covenant. (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 4:2

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians.  
May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.

Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it. You have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Let us see, O Lord, your mercy  
and give us your saving help.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples: “There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.

“Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.”

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, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make,  
gathered from among your gifts to us,  
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below  
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

The Lord will bestow his bounty,  
and our earth shall yield its increase.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

May these mysteries, O Lord,  
in which we have participated,  
profit us, we pray,  
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,  
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven  
and hold fast to what endures.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Time always seems long to the child who is waiting – for Christmas, for next summer, for becoming a grownup: long also when he surrenders his whole soul to each moment of a happy day.

*Dag Hammarskjöld*

## THE TWO COMINGS OF CHRIST

(LUKE 21:25-28, 34-36)



Our first Gospel reading for the new liturgical cycle presents Jesus speaking to his disciples about the coming of the “Son of Man” for the final judgement, indicated by his mentioning “signs”, both in the cosmic and human realms.

He urges his followers to see in these events the heralding of their redemption, the definitive establishing of the kingdom of God; therefore, they should respond positively with confidence and eager anticipation.

There is no time-frame given for the events which Luke describes. By the time he is writing, it is clear that the second coming may be long delayed, so the disciples have to settle down to life in the meantime. This can lead to their becoming complacent and slipping into bad habits, so the reading also gives instruction about remaining alert. Some of the warnings Luke has given earlier find an echo here, for instance, that of the parable of the steward who abuses his position over the household, thinking that the owner is not likely to arrive anytime soon; and the parable of the seed which is choked by thorns, interpreted as “the worries and riches and pleasures of life” which stifle a wholehearted response to the word of God, not to mention indulging excessively in drink and dissolute behaviour. He prefaces all this by the instruction to keep praying, which will keep them in the proper attitude to welcome the arrival of the Son of Man. ■

**REFLECT**

The word “Advent” means approach, arrival, coming. The liturgy in these four weeks leading up to the celebration of Christmas invites us to reflect on two comings of Christ. The first is Christ's coming into our world as one of us “in every way except sin”. The second, less comfortable coming is at the end of time, when Christ will appear in glory as universal judge. We can see from the earliest writings of the apostle Paul that the first disciples expected the second coming to take place within their lifetime, then had to come to terms with the fact that this was growing more and more unlikely.

The greatest danger, perhaps, is that we become, unintentionally, complacent, that indeed the cares and problems of daily life can gradually weaken our commitment to living as disciples of Jesus. Thus, the season of Advent encourages us to prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the first coming, as though we were expecting his final appearing: the Prefaces of the Mass for Advent put it this way; “that, when he comes again in glory and majesty... we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope”; and “so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise”.

Advent, like Lent, is a penitential season in which we are encouraged to look at ourselves and correct anything which detracts from our full commitment to the person of Jesus and his teachings. It is a time to renew and strengthen our relationship with Jesus. ■

**LEARN**

The word “Advent” means coming, arrival, approach.

The season of Advent has two themes: the coming of Christ in our human flesh at Christmas and Christ's second coming in power and glory for judgement.

Advent is a penitential season to prepare for the feast of the Incarnation: hence purple vestments and the omission of the Gloria at Mass.

**SAY**

“Hark! A herald voice is calling: ‘Christ is nigh,’ it seems to say.”  
*(Edward Caswall)*

**DO**

Pay close attention to the Preface of the Mass during Advent: read it over at home and notice the references to the second coming of Christ.