

**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, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Dn 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.

**RESP. PSALM**

Psalm 15

Response:

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

1. 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.)

2. 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.)
3. 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**

Heb 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.

**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**

Mk 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.

**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,  
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.

**ST. TERESA OF AVILA**

Govern everything by your wisdom, O Lord,  
so that my soul may always be serving you  
in the way you will  
and not as I choose.  
Let me die to myself so that I may serve you;  
let me live to you who are life itself.  
Amen.



Today's Gospel is taken from Jesus' final teaching to his disciples. It took place on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem in full view of the temple.

The disciples, poor country boys, were impressed by the imposing building built of elegantly cut stones that can still be seen today. Despite its marvellous construction, Jesus tells them, it will be flattened to the earth. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans took place in 70 AD. It was so thorough that, as the Jewish historian Josephus wrote, only some stubs of towers were left to show what a great city had once stood there.

Talk of such an impending catastrophe inevitably leads on to other things. Will there be any signs when this is going to happen? If a great city can fall, is this a sign for the end of the world? In the first part of today's Gospel, Jesus tells them that a war, or even the destruction of a great city like Jerusalem is not necessarily the end of the human story. Speculation about the end of the human story was common at this time among Jewish writers especially. They had a sense that the world was so full of evil that the only solution was to destroy it and replace it with a new world order. Writings

of this kind are known as 'apocalypses.' It is commonly thought to mean something like 'great disaster,' e.g. the film about the Vietnam War, Apocalypse Now. In fact, 'apocalypse' is a Greek word and means 'revelation' and this kind of writing claims to unfold heavenly mysteries.

Mark uses 'apocalypse-language' in this part of his Gospel. The end of the human world will be a time of distress but it will culminate, not in a 'great disaster' but in the final act of salvation history, the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man, in his glory and the gathering of the nations before him.

Mark wrote his Gospel around the time of the fall of Jerusalem. News of the destruction of the city and its temple may have prompted some believers to ask the inevitable question: is this the sign of that we are entering the final stage of the human story? Mark reports Jesus' teaching: no one, but God, knows when the world is going to end. In the meantime, we learn to read the signs of the times. Just as the leaves appearing on trees in spring time point to autumn when the trees will bear fruit, so calamitous events, even wars and disasters in the human story, are a call to be attentive. ■

## REFLECT

Predicting the end of the world has become an occupation for both would-be religious leaders and scientists. The first often predict the end time by identifying signs or events in the bible. Beyond their immediate followers, they are seldom taken very seriously. Scientists might appear more persuasive since they use evidence such as dramatic climate change that could extinguish human and animal life, collision of the earth with an asteroid, the sun's loss of power to give heat and light. Their predictions often operate on a time-scale of centuries or millennia, so there is less immediate panic.

Many of our prayers have a dimension that looks towards God's future. Jesus taught us to pray for the coming of God's kingdom. In every Mass, we pray that we will be kept safe from all distress, as we await the coming of our saviour, Jesus Christ. The thought this distant future is especially common in the final Sundays of the year and at the beginning of Advent. Is it the death of nature in winter time, the shortening of the days that make us more mindful that we do not own the world? The long-term Christian view is not a pessimistic one. The world will surely come to an end. When, we do not know but we do know that it is in the hands of an all-loving and gracious God who will bring in a new heaven and a new earth. ■

## LEARN

Christian faith does not teach that the world goes on forever, but that it will come to an end in God's good time.

God's universe is vast and beyond our grasp but we believe it to be beautiful and ordered.

Care for creation is a religious duty: taking our litter home or not using aerosols more than is necessary can be an act of worship.

## DO

Re-read the first reading and Gospel of today's Mass during the week and notice how both of them teach a message of hope.

## PRAY

Ask the Lord to help you to read the signs of the times in what is taking place on our world today.

## SAY

May we be free from sin and safe from all distress as we await the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.