

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,
one 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.



In today's Gospel passage we have the unusual report of a friendly exchange between Jesus and one of the scribes.

The topic of which commandment is the most important seems to have been a common subject for discussion and debate in the time of Jesus, and the scribe's enquiry is a genuine one, not a trap. The questioner is interested to hear what Jesus thinks about the matter. Jesus' answer is in conformity with the Jewish practice then (and now) of reciting the passage from Deuteronomy which begins, "Listen, Israel..." To this commandment to love God, Jesus adds the instruction from Leviticus about loving one's neighbour. The scribe applauds Jesus' answer and adds that loving God is more important than offering sacrifice; Jesus in turn commends the scribe for "speaking wisely" by adding this observation to the biblical text. By mentioning the list of personal faculties – heart, soul, mind and strength – Jesus and the scribe are expressing the notion of the whole person being oriented towards the Lord.

"Loving the Lord" is not an expression we find very often in the Bible. We would be better not to interpret love in this context as an emotion. It refers more to living the kind of life the Lord expects, which God has communicated through the Word. If this is to be more than outward observance, it needs a deeper inner motive. The book of Deuteronomy, from which Jesus quotes, is concerned with the covenant, the relationship between God and Israel. Part of the ritual of renewing the covenant was the proclaiming of what the Lord had done for the people in their history. Their reason for renewing the relationship was then based on gratitude for the Lord's intervening on their behalf. Gratitude would therefore be the basis for their observing the Law and being truly the people of the Lord in the world. ■

REFLECT

Many Catholics will remember the parish missions preached by the Redemptorists and members of other religious orders. The abiding memory of a lot of people is of preachers speaking at length (and considerable volume) about hellfire and related subjects. The listeners were then encouraged to go to Confession to put things right with God before some fearful fate befell them. The problem with being frightened into amending one's life is that a resolution based on fear does not last (to say nothing of the effect such preaching had on sensitive folk). Only a positive reason will give a person the attitude which will allow them to relate to the Lord in an ongoing healthy and life-giving way. It will also allow them to live out the demands of their faith in a manner that reflects deep commitment and joy. Jesus and the scribe would probably agree on this: that if we love the Lord our God, if we truly appreciate what the Lord has done for us in the person of Jesus, then living the Christian life will not be a burden but our loving response to the God who first loved us. ■

SAY

Let your words be written on my heart.

LEARN

The text from Deuteronomy (Chapter 6 verses 4-9) is known as the Shema.

The Hebrew word Shema means 'Hear!' or 'Listen!'

Devout Jewish people recite this text three times a day.

The words of the *Shema* are written on paper and put in a container which is fixed to the outside doorpost of the house. The container is known as a mezuzah.

DO

As you leave the church, make the Sign of the Cross with holy water. It was a common custom at one time to find a small holy water stoup by the front door of people's homes. You might consider reviving this practice: like the mezuzah, its purpose was to remind us of our commitment to God. The use of holy water is to help us remember our baptismal bond with the Lord.

