

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait
for you,
that your prophets be found true.
Hear the prayers of your servant,
and of your people 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

Look upon us, O God,
Creator and ruler of all things,
and, that we may feel the working of your
mercy,
grant that we may serve you with all our
heart.

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

Isaiah 50:5-9

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord has opened my ear.

For my part, I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.
I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;
I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.

The Lord comes to my help,
so that I am untouched by the insults.
So, too, I set my face like flint;
I know I shall not be shamed.

My vindicator is here at hand. Does anyone
start proceedings against me?
Then let us go to court together.
Who thinks he has a case against me?
Let him approach me.
The Lord is coming to my help,
who dare condemn me?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 114

Response:

I will walk in the presence of the Lord,
in the land of the living
or
Alleluia!

1. I love the Lord for he has heard
the cry of my appeal;
for he turned his ear to me
in the day when I called him. (R.)
2. They surrounded me, the snares of death,
with the anguish of the tomb;
they caught me, sorrow and distress.
I called on the Lord's name.
O Lord my God, deliver me! (R.)
3. How gracious is the Lord, and just;
our God has compassion.
The Lord protects the simple hearts;
I was helpless so he saved me. (R.)
4. He has kept my soul from death,
my eyes from tears
and my feet from stumbling.
I will walk in the presence of the Lord
in the land of the living. (R.)

SECOND READING

James 2:14-18

A reading from the letter of St James.

Take the case, my brothers, of someone who
has never done a single good act but claims
that he has faith. Will that faith save him? If
one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in
need of clothes and has not enough food to
live on, and one of you says to them, "I wish
you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty,"
without giving them these bare necessities of
life, then what good is that? Faith is like that:
if good works do not go with it, it is quite
dead.

This is the way to talk to people of that
kind: "You say you have faith and I have good
deeds; I will prove to you that I have faith
by showing you my good deeds – now you
prove to me that you have faith without any
good deeds to show."

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 8:27-35

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

Jesus and his disciples left for the villages
round Caesarea Philippi. On the way he
put this question to his disciples, "Who do
people say I am?" And they told him. "John
the Baptist," they said, "others Elijah; others
again, one of the prophets." "But you," he
asked "who do you say I am?" Peter spoke
up and said to him, "You are the Christ." And
he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone
about him.

And he began to teach them that the Son
of Man was destined to suffer grievously,
to be rejected by the elders and the chief
priests and the scribes, and to be put to
death, and after three days to rise again; and
he said all this quite openly. Then, taking
him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with
him. But, turning and seeing his disciples, he
rebuked Peter and said to him, "Get behind
me, Satan! Because the way you think is not
God's way but man's."

He called the people and his disciples
to him and said, "If anyone wants to be a
follower of mine, let him renounce himself
and take up his cross and follow me. For
anyone who wants to save his life will lose
it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake,
and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

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 on our supplications, O Lord,

and in your kindness accept these, your

servants' offerings,

that what each has offered to the honour of

your name

may serve the salvation of all.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

How precious is your mercy, O God!

The children of men seek shelter in the

shadow of your wings.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the working of this heavenly gift, O Lord,

we pray,

take possession of our minds and bodies,

so that its effects, and not our own desires,

may always prevail in us.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?

MARK 8:27-35

One of the uncomfortable features of Mark's account is that no one understands properly who Jesus really is until the declaration of the centurion at the cross.

No one has any privileged insight into Jesus' identity, and the early part of the Gospel shows misunderstanding on the part of different groups of people. So when Peter answers Jesus' question to the disciples as to whom they believe him to be with the words "You are the Christ", Jesus does not accept it in the way he does in Matthew's version of the story.

Peter has not received a special revelation from God, so his reasoning that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, must come from his observing Jesus as teacher and healer, which is not sufficient to show a proper understanding of Jesus as the Son of God: this comes from the cross. Also, the term *Messiah* (or 'the Christ') had political and nationalistic overtones which could lead to people having false expectations about Jesus and his mission. The first prediction of the Passion comes as a corrective to this view.

The story of Jesus being tested by Satan followed immediately on Jesus' being baptised and revealed as the 'Son of God'. How does Jesus understand being the Son of God? The correct answer for Mark lies in the cross. But Peter does not understand this and tries to deflect Jesus from the path laid out for him. Jesus rebukes him, calling him Satan. Thus the same test comes, but this time through a human being, one who is close to Jesus and acting out of the best of motives. Jesus is on a journey during which his true identity will be revealed. His followers are on the same journey and Jesus tells them that anyone who would be a disciple must also take up their own cross and follow. Like master, like disciple. ■

LEARN

There is no account of the birth of Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark.

The Gospel according to Mark has been described as "a Passion narrative with a long introduction".

The theology of the cross dominates Mark's account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

Peter is the spokesperson for the disciples in the Gospel tradition.

DO

Make the Sign of the Cross. Remember that the cross is the sign of the extent of God's love for you and the measure of Jesus' willingness to carry out his mission.



REFLECT

Mark's Gospel narrative opens with Jesus as an adult. There is no account of his birth which reveals to human beings who Jesus truly is. The idea that Jesus' family members could therefore misunderstand who he really is, is difficult for many of us to grasp since we are so familiar with the narratives of the birth of Jesus from Luke and Matthew, which centre on the characters of Mary and Joseph. But we have to read each Gospel story on its own terms and struggle with the uncomfortable questions which arise, without bringing in details from elsewhere to smooth over the difficulties.

Many of us who have been brought up in the Christian faith cannot understand the bafflement which those who have no Christian background feel when faced with the claim that Jesus is the Son of God. Some such Christians actually envy those who have come to believe through a process of struggle and questioning rather than having been taught and accepted the faith from an early age. Those who come later have had to answer for themselves the question Jesus puts to Peter: "Who do you say I am?" But we are all being asked that question; we have to answer for ourselves, and not rely on what we were told a long time ago. ■

SAY

Jesus is the Christ.