

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,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING ECCLESIASTICUS 35:12-14. 16-19

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.

The Lord is a judge
who is no respecter of personages.
He shows no respect of personages to the
detriment of a poor man,
he listens to the plea of the injured party.
He does not ignore the orphan's supplication,
nor the widow's as she pours out her story.
The man who with his whole heart serves
God will be accepted,
his petitions will carry to the clouds.
The humble man's prayer pierces the clouds,
until it arrives he is inconsolable,
nor will he desist until the Most High takes
notice of him,
acquits the virtuous and delivers judgement.
And the Lord will not be slow,
nor will he be dilatory on their behalf.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 32

Response:

This poor man called; the Lord heard him.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad. (R.)
2. The Lord turns his face against the
wicked
to destroy their remembrance from the
earth.

The just call and the Lord hears
and rescues them in all their distress. (R.)

3. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;
those whose spirit is crushed he will
save.
The Lord ransoms the souls of his
servants.
Those who hide in him shall not be
condemned. (R.)

SECOND READING 2 Timothy 4:6-8. 16-18

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy.

My life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

The first time I had to present my defence, there was not a single witness to support me. Every one of them deserted me – may they not be held accountable for it. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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

Luke 18:9-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else. "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, 'I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get.' The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted."

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.



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

(LUKE 18:9-14)

The Prayers of Pharisees and Tax Collectors in the Temple, depicted in stained glass in St Mary Abbots Church, Kensington High Street, London

Once more, Luke returns to his comparison between the apparently righteous religious leaders and those on the margins. In one sense, the Pharisee is correct about his behaviour: he has indeed lived up to his obligations.

There is nothing wrong in his reciting his good works: this was part of the prayer of the time. His fault lies in his comparing himself with other people, and in particular the tax-collector, to the detriment of the latter. He also makes a sweeping judgment about the moral condition of “the rest of mankind”. Jesus presents him as saying his prayer to himself, an ironic comment, if ever there was one. Hence the observation that Jesus’ audience prided themselves on being virtuous is even more poignant, because this is a term that Luke applies to very few persons in the Gospel: people like Elizabeth and Zechariah, who are exemplary in their observance of the Law. The Pharisee is just as punctilious in his observance: but this is cancelled out by his judgmental attitude.

The tax-collector, on the other hand, is a model of humility. He recognises who and what he really is. He offers no excuses, makes no long speeches, but simply says, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner”. It is his self-acceptance which justifies him. Luke ends the parable with the message about situations being reversed by God: God will humble those who exalt themselves and God will exalt those who humble themselves. ■

REFLECT

Humility is a word which often gets a bad press. It is sometimes identified with humiliation: a person who has been humiliated does not necessarily become humble; they may end up ashamed or resentful. Humility is sometimes described as ‘being right-sized’: this suggests that people have a proper appreciation of themselves, they acknowledge their talents, their shortcomings and accept their limitations. The Pharisee represents persons who are self-sufficient, who tell the Lord how good they are and do not see the need to ask for the gift of being made righteous: in their eyes, this is something they have earned. The tax-collector has no illusions about himself and only asks for mercy. He receives the gift because he acknowledges his need of it.

There is a warning for all of us in this parable. It is always possible for people who pray and carry out all their religious obligations to become complacent about their own situation and also become judgmental about others. This can happen without their being aware of it. Prayer can also become a self-centred rather than God-centred exercise, if we fall into the habit of saying prayers by rote and forget that it is essentially a conversation with God: it is a relationship between God and ourselves. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves occasionally whether our devotions are bringing us closer to God, or whether they have become simply a habit, an end in themselves. The Pharisee was doing all the right things and thought he was close to God: he was wrong. ■

LEARN

The proper posture for prayer in the Bible is standing.

Prayer is a relationship with God.

To be humble is to accept ourselves as we are, with our positive qualities and our limitations.

SAY

God, be merciful to me, a sinner
(Luke 18:13)

DO

Develop your conscious contact with God so that you are aware of God’s presence in your life throughout the day.

