

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

O Lord, I trust in your merciful love.  
My heart will rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful  
with me.

**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, we pray, almighty God,  
that, always pondering spiritual things,  
we may carry out in both word and deed  
that which is pleasing to you.  
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**

Lev 19:1-2.17-18

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

The Lord spoke to Moses; he said: "Speak to the whole community of the sons of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.

"You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. You must openly tell him, your neighbour, of his offence; this way you will not take a sin upon yourself. You must not exact vengeance, nor must you bear a grudge against the children of your people. You must love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Ps 102

Response:

**The Lord is compassion and love.**

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord,  
all my being, bless his holy name.  
My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
and never forget all his blessings. (R.)

2. It is he who forgives all your guilt,  
who heals every one of your ills,  
who redeems your life from the grave,  
who crowns you with love and  
compassion. (R.)

3. The Lord is compassion and love,  
slow to anger and rich in mercy.  
He does not treat us according to our sins  
nor repay us according to our faults. (R.)

4. As far as the east is from the west  
so far does he remove our sins.  
As a father has compassion on his sons,  
the Lord has pity on those who fear him.  
(R.)

**SECOND READING**

1 Cor 3:16-23

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple.

Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture says: The Lord knows wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are, or again: God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise. So there is nothing to boast about in anything human: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life and death, the present and future, are all your servants; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, Alleluia!

When anyone obeys what Christ has said,  
God's love comes to perfection in him.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Mt 5:38-48

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples: "You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

"You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect."

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 celebrate your mysteries, O Lord,  
with the observance that is your due,  
we humbly ask you,  
that what we offer to the honour of your  
majesty  
may profit us for salvation.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

I will recount all your wonders,  
I will rejoice in you and be glad,  
and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that we may experience the effects of the  
salvation  
which is pledged to us by these mysteries.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



## ONLY AN EYE FOR AN EYE!

(MATT 5:38-48)

*A depiction of the Sermon on the Mount*

Matthew continues his presentation of the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The teaching about an eye for an eye is often held up as illustrating the superiority of the Gospel over the supposed savagery of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament).

However, the law of retaliation, as it is known, was, in fact, an attempt to limit violence and to prevent fairly minor incidents escalating into full-blown vendettas. The text really means only an eye for an eye: the punishment had to be in proportion to the offence or injury. Jesus then goes on to advocate meeting any kind of vicious treatment with goodness.

Jesus also expands the meaning of one's neighbour. In some quarters, this term was understood to apply only to members of one's family or tribe and so a person's responsibilities extended no further than that. But as in much of his teaching, especially in the parables, Jesus is challenging his disciples to look at the world as God does. God's blessings in nature are not restricted to any privileged group or withheld from the apparently undeserving. God's attitude should be the standard for the disciples of Jesus: we are to be perfect, like our Heavenly Father, in God's concern for all people. ■

## REFLECT

There are perhaps few passages in the Gospel which are more challenging than this one. On the one hand, we have the example of the Hindu Mahatma Gandhi who personified this teaching of Jesus and showed what can be achieved by a policy of nonviolence. We have the figure of Archbishop Oscar Romero who was murdered after calling on the army of his country to stop the oppression. On the other, arguments rage over how to oppose injustice on the national and international scene. It is all too clear that there is no agreement on how to apply this teaching of Jesus about the nonviolent response and attitude to people whom we regard as hostile to us.

But the complexity of the wider question does not mean that we can ignore Jesus' teaching for our own personal lives. Even if we can only decide that it means treating everyone else with respect simply because they are human beings like ourselves, that would be a start. We could also examine ourselves and see if we are bearing grudges and waiting for the opportunity to get our own back over some slight or insult (real or imagined). At the very least, we might discover that we feel better in ourselves if we forgive those others and lay down the burden of anger and resentment which we have been carrying around. ■

## DO

Note from the news bulletins and papers how much war and strife is due to people bearing grudges and refusing to talk to each other. Resolve not to add to the hatred and ill-feeling in the world.



## LEARN

The doctrine of an eye for an eye is known as the *Lex talionis*, or the law of retaliation.

It actually means only an eye for an eye: revenge has to be in proportion to the offence.

It was developed to restrict the spread of violence and the practice of vendetta.

## SAY

**The Lord is compassion  
and love, slow to anger  
and rich in mercy**

(Psalm 102:8)