

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

Glorify 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,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Mal 3:19-20

A reading from the prophet Malachi.

The day is coming now, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and the evil-doers will be like stubble. The day that is coming is going to burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, leaving them neither root nor stalk. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will shine out with healing in its rays.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 97

Response:

The Lord comes to rule the peoples with fairness.

1. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn acclaim the King, the Lord. (R.)
2. Let the sea and all within it, thunder; the world, and all its peoples.
Let the rivers clap their hands and the hills ring out their joy at the presence of the Lord. (R.)
3. For the Lord comes,
he comes to rule the earth.
He will rule the world with justice and the peoples with fairness. (R.)

SECOND READING

2 Thes 3:7-12

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

You know how you are supposed to imitate us: now we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we ever have our meals at anyone's table without paying for them; no, we worked night and day, slaving and straining, so as not to be a burden on any of you. This was not because we had no right to be, but in order to make ourselves an example for you to follow.

We gave you a rule when we were with you: not to let anyone have any food if he refused to do any work. Now we hear that there are some of you who are living in idleness, doing no work themselves but interfering with everyone else's. In the Lord Jesus Christ, we order and call on people of this kind to go on quietly working and earning the food that they eat.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Stay awake, praying at all times
for the strength to stand with confidence
before the Son of Man.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 21:5-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All these things you are staring at now the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed." And they put to him this question: "Master," they said "when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that this is about to take place?"

"Take care not to be deceived," he said "because many will come using my name and saying, 'I am he' and, 'The time is near at hand.' Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon." Then he said to them, "Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

"But before all this happens, men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives."

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

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.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

LUKE 21:5-19

Nouriel Roubini

It was *The New York Times* that labelled him Dr Doom in a 2008 profile that identified Nouriel Roubini as an unlikely hero of the global financial meltdown of that year.

In 2006, in an address to the IMF, he predicted that the US economy was at risk of a housing bust and deep recession that would have dire consequences for the entire world.

Others predicted it, too, but no one was as accurate as Roubini. He was ridiculed for it, but he was right. He read the signs of the times correctly.

In February 2008, he wrote a paper called '12 Steps To Financial Disaster', in which he described precisely how the crisis would unfold. "I said two major broker-dealers are going to go bust, and there won't be any major independent broker-dealer left in the next two years. It took seven months for Bear Stearns and Lehman to be gone. It's not a fuzzy case of me saying there would be a financial crisis. I was very specific.

"You look at history, you look at political data, you look at models, you look at comparisons," Roubini says. "There were tens of different signals that would eventually lead to a tipping point. The fact that there would be a crisis was totally obvious to me."

Nouriel Roubini was able to read the signs of the times. The signs were all there, but other economists and politicians either could not read them or didn't want to read them.

Today's Gospel is all about reading the signs of the times. We always read it at the end of the church's liturgical year.

Jesus describes the end times, when the Messiah will come in final judgement, and tells his disciples to be on the alert for it. He uses the fig tree as an image of how to read the signs of the times. Unlike most trees in Israel which are evergreen, the fig tree is not. It loses its leaves in autumn and only puts out new ones in late spring. When people see the new leaves, they know that summer isn't far off. In the same way, Jesus says, when people witness the dramatic events he describes in the Gospel, they will know the end times are close.

We need always to be on the alert, wide awake, ready. There are two aspects to reading the signs of the times. The first is to be attentive to what's going on in the world around us. The second is to be always prepared for when our end comes because we don't know when that will happen. Like Nouriel Roubini, we need to read the signs of the times. ■

REFLECT

"Sign of the times" is a phrase strongly associated with Vatican II. It was taken to mean that the church should listen to and learn from the world around it. It should learn to read the "sign(s) of the times" and respond to them.

What signs of the times might we need to be attentive to today in our families, our country, our church? Perhaps there is a family member in distress whose plight we might not have noticed. What issues or trends might we need to see in our families?

In our country, there are so many people in distress, families struggling to make ends meet, mired in debt, whose credit is maxed out and who are dreading Christmas. How sensitive are we as a society to people in need and the demands of justice?

In our church, we also need to read the signs of the times. It's something Pope John XXIII did. He saw the need for reform in the church even when most others didn't. And so he called Vatican II. It's why Pope Francis has initiated the synodal process currently underway in the universal church.

What might the signs of the times be saying to our church today as priest numbers fall, as allegiance to the faith crumbles, and the church's influence wanes? How should we respond as the People of God?

Nouriel Roubini read the signs of the times correctly and was ridiculed for it. But he was proved right in the end.

As the people of God, we also must be equally attentive to the signs of the times and respond to them as best we can. ■

LEARN

Christians witness to the faith at all times and in all places.

God is always faithful to his people.

The Christian is happy to suffer for the sake of the Kingdom.

DO

Look at the world around you. How good are we at reading the signs of the times?

SAY

Lord, I thank you for the gift of faith. Help me to live the faith I profess. Amen.

PRAY

It is not easy to witness to the Gospel in the increasingly secular world in which we live. Pray for yourself and your parish community for the strength to be faithful followers of Jesus.