

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield;
and look on the face of your anointed one;
one day within your courts
is better than a thousand elsewhere.

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

O God, who have prepared for those who
love you
good things which no eye can see,
fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of
your love,
so that, loving you in all things and above all
things,
we may attain your promises,
which surpass every human desire.
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

Jer 38:4-6. 8-10

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

The king's leading men spoke to the king. "Let Jeremiah be put to death: he is unquestionably disheartening the remaining soldiers in the city, and all the people too, by talking like this. The fellow does not have the welfare of this people at heart so much as its ruin." "He is in your hands as you know," King Zedekiah answered, "for the king is powerless against you." So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the well of Prince Malchiah in the Court of the Guard, letting him down with ropes. There was no water in the well, only mud, and into the mud Jeremiah sank.

Ebed-melech came out from the palace and spoke to the king. "My lord king," he said "these men have done a wicked thing by treating the prophet Jeremiah like this: they have thrown him into the well where he will die." At this the king gave Ebed-melech the Cushite the following order: "Take three men with you from here and pull the prophet Jeremiah out of the well before he dies."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 39

Response:

Lord, come to my aid!

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry. (R.)
2. He drew me from the deadly pit,
from the miry clay.
He set my feet upon a rock
and made my footsteps firm. (R.)
3. He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God.
Many shall see and fear
and shall trust in the Lord. (R.)
4. As for me, wretched and poor,
the Lord thinks of me.
You are my rescuer, my help,
O God, do not delay. (R.)

SECOND READING

Heb 12:1-4

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then, should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, disregarding the shameful of it, and from now on has taken his place at the right of God's throne. Think of the way he stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of death.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Open our heart, O Lord,
to accept the words of your Son
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 12:49-53

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

"Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

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

Receive our oblation, O Lord,
by which is brought about a glorious
exchange,
that, by offering what you have given,
we may merit to receive your very self.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

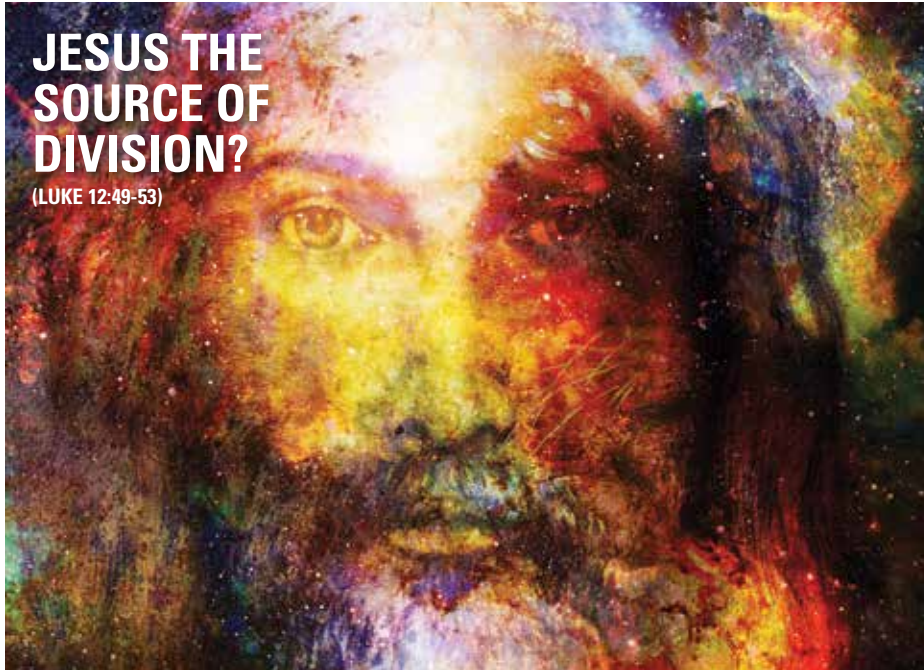
With the Lord there is mercy;
in him is plentiful redemption.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Made partakers of Christ through these
Sacraments,
we humbly implore your mercy, Lord,
that, conformed to his image on earth,
we may merit also to be his coheirs in
heaven.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

We thank you Father for the life and
knowledge which you have made known to
us through Jesus your Son. As this bread
which we have broken was once scattered on
the hillside and was gathered and became
one again, so may your Church be gathered
from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.
For yours is the glory and the power through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Didache 2nd century



JESUS THE SOURCE OF DIVISION?

(LUKE 12:49-53)

Luke presents Jesus as a prophet, the bearer of the Word of God. People are challenged to make a decision: do they accept the prophet and the prophet's message or not? However we understand the opening sentences of today's Gospel reading, there is no mistaking the urgency with which Jesus sees himself and his mission.

Jesus is not encouraging or approving family quarrels or disputes. He is saying, as a prophet, that people have to decide where they stand in regard to himself and his message. This will inevitably lead to disagreements, even splits, within family and other close relationships. But this is a consequence of individuals deciding for themselves whether they accept Jesus and his preaching. It is a matter of faith and theology, the person's understanding of God, not of human domestic or personal relationships. ■

REFLECT

Often, the image we have of Jesus is a compassionate, perhaps harmless, teacher of religion. The idea that Jesus could promote fierce arguments within families or the wider community does not figure in most people's imagining of the Gospel narrative. In some ways, it is a reversal of the picture of the prophet who brings about reconciliation between members of different generations.

In recent years, we have seen deep division developing in different parts of the world over political questions. People have been identifying themselves with positions, often defined by simplistic slogans, and refusing to listen to, consider, or discuss the points of view of others. This is not the teaching of the Gospel. We are encouraged to talk to each other, to listen respectfully to others' opinions, to

disagree if we feel differently but, above all, to remain on a friendly and mannerly level of civility.

Within the church community, there are lively debates about all sorts of issues. For many people, it is distressing to see accusations of bad faith being levelled at those who hold a different opinion. It is even more hurtful when individuals do not have the moral courage to stand up for their point of view, but resort to (anonymously) reporting others for what they consider unorthodox opinions – without having to undergo any process to justify their claims. Their accusations are accepted by church authorities as valid, and the person accused has to defend themselves against anonymous accusations. How do you disprove a negative?

SAY

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
(attributed to St Francis)

LEARN

In biblical terms, a trial was not meant to establish the guilt of the person accused:

The purpose of the public confrontation was to bring about an admission of guilt and the reconciliation of the parties involved.

Jesus is not condoning family quarrels or ongoing resentments.

To accept Jesus and his teachings may bring about family or social divisions: this is the (often unfortunate) result of prophetic preaching.

DO

Do you have a grudge or resentment against somebody? Sort it out!



Jesus, in line with the biblical tradition, teaches the doctrine of reconciliation. The process requires the person initially to confront the other with the perceived wrongdoing: if that does not resolve the issue, then the wider community becomes involved, but the desired result is not the conviction of an offender, but the restoration of the relationship.

Perhaps in our church community, we need more of this biblical vision of restoring relationships. But peace at any price is not the teaching of the Scriptures. If someone decides not to remain within the community, then God will accept their decision. Jesus asks us all to decide where we stand. ■