

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Within your will, O Lord, all things are established,  
and there is none that can resist your will.  
For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth,  
and all that is held within the circle of heaven;  
you are the Lord of all.

**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,  
who in the abundance of your kindness  
surpass the merits and the desires of those  
who entreat you,  
pour out your mercy upon us  
to pardon what conscience dreads  
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.  
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** Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

A reading from the prophet Habakkuk.

How long, Lord, am I to cry for help  
while you will not listen;  
to cry "Oppression!" in your ear  
and you will not save?  
Why do you set injustice before me,  
why do you look on where there is tyranny?  
Outrage and violence, this is all I see,  
all is contention, and discord flourishes.  
Then the Lord answered and said,  
"Write the vision down,  
inscribe it on tablets  
to be easily read,  
since this vision is for its own time only:  
eager for its own fulfilment, it does not  
deceive;  
if it comes slowly, wait,  
for come it will, without fail.  
See how he flags, he whose soul is not at  
rights,  
but the upright man will live by his  
faithfulness."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalms 94

Response:

O that today you would listen to his voice!  
Harden not your hearts.

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;  
hail the rock who saves us.  
Let us come before him, giving thanks,  
with songs let us hail the Lord (R.)
2. Come in; let us bow and bend low;  
let us kneel before the God who made us  
for he is our God and we  
the people who belong to his pasture,  
the flock that is led by his hand. (R.)
3. O that today you would listen to his  
voice!  
"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
as on that day at Massah in the desert  
when your fathers put me to the test;  
when they tried me, though they saw my  
work." (R.)

**SECOND READING** 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

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

I am reminding you to fan into a flame the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, but the spirit of power, and love, and self-control. So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner; but with me, bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News, relying on the power of God.

Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. You have been trusted to look after something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening;  
you have the message of eternal life.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Luke 17:5-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

"Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, 'Come and have your meal immediately?' Would he not be more likely to say, 'Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards?' Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, 'We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty.'"

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**

Accept, O Lord, we pray,  
the sacrifices instituted by your commands  
and, through the sacred mysteries,  
which we celebrate with dutiful service,  
graciously complete the sanctifying work  
by which you are pleased to redeem us.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

The Lord is good to those who hope in him,  
to the soul that seeks him.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant us, almighty God,  
that we may be refreshed and nourished  
by the Sacrament which we have received,  
so as to be transformed into what we  
consume.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



## MERELY SERVANTS?

(LUKE 17:5-10)

Our Gospel passage today is part of a longer section in which Jesus has already warned his hearers about giving scandal to “any of these little ones” and the punishment which will follow.

Next comes the requirement to forgive a member of the community if the guilty party repents. His teaching up to now can be understood in a general way, applying to everyone: these rather stinging remarks are addressed to the disciples themselves. The first of the sayings which we hear in today’s Gospel section comes with the apostles asking Jesus to “increase our faith”: Jesus’ reply suggests that they do not have any faith at all or it would be shown in their lives through power.

These three demands – not giving scandal, forgiving others, and having faith – are the minimum requirements for life in the Kingdom: these are the basic conditions, so disciples should not expect thanks or a reward for doing what they have been commanded. Luke actually uses the word slave: a slave has no rights or meaningful relationship with the person usually described as his or her owner. Jesus is not condoning this social structure but using it to make the point that his disciples should not regard living by his teaching as something to be proud of or anything to boast about. It is a duty, and all are “merely servants”. ■

### LEARN

The church is essentially the People of God.

Baptism is the fundamental sacrament: through baptism we are all members of a royal priesthood and a holy nation.

The first vocation for all the members of the People of God is to be a disciple of Jesus: how we live out that calling depends on the individual. No way of living out Christian discipleship is essentially better or higher than any other.

### REFLECT

It is interesting that Luke presents Jesus here as speaking to “the apostles” rather than the disciples. It is true that this teaching applies to all the followers of Jesus, but it is, nonetheless, directed specifically at the inner circle of twelve specially chosen individuals. There is always a temptation for members of an inner circle to see themselves as somehow apart from the general group and perhaps in some way above the other members. There are warnings in the Gospel about allowing structures from civil society to take root in the community of disciples and about the danger of office-bearers and teachers being given titles and other special marks of respect. The emphasis is that all disciples of Jesus are sisters and brothers, and to exercise authority is to be the servant of all.

The fact that Jesus’ comment about being “merely servants” is addressed to the apostles could be something worth pondering today. The church is the People of God. It does not consist of the clergy alone, and not the ‘higher clergy’ at that. When the press condemns ‘the church’ for the scandals and cover-ups of recent years, it should really be talking about those who hold positions of authority among the People of God. Members, lay and ordained, who celebrate the Eucharist and try to live out the Gospel teachings of Jesus in their daily lives are not responsible for the appalling crimes, abuses of power and cover-ups which have come to light. To ask lay members to pray and to do penance could seem like trying to spread the responsibility – and blame. ■

### DO

Make the sign of the cross with holy water and renew your baptismal commitment to Jesus. Pray for the leaders within the People of God.

### SAY

**I am doing no more than my duty as a disciple of Jesus.**