

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

How worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and divinity,
and wisdom and strength and honour.
To him belong glory and power for ever and
ever.

GLORIA

Glorify 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,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,
grant, we pray,
that the whole creation, set free from slavery,
may render your majesty service
and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.
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

Ez 34:11-12.15-17

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel

The Lord says this: I am going to look after
my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As
a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when
he stands up in the middle of his scattered
sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I
shall rescue them from wherever they have
been scattered during the mist and darkness.
I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will
show them where to rest – it is the Lord who
speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring
back the stray, bandage the wounded and
make the weak strong. I shall watch over the
fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to
them.

As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this:
I will judge between sheep and sheep,
between rams and he-goats.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 22

Response:

**The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.**

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures
where he give me repose. (R.)

2. Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.
He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name. (R.)
3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. (R.)
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall
follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Cor 15:20-26.28

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

Christ has been raised from the dead, the
first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.
Death came through one man and in the
same way the resurrection of the dead has
come through one man. Just as all men die
in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in
Christ; but all of them in their proper order:
Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the
coming of Christ, those who belong to him.
After that will come the end, when he hands
over the kingdom to God the Father, having
done away with every sovereignty, authority
and power. For he must be king until he has
put all his enemies under his feet and the last
of the enemies to be destroyed is death. And
when everything is subjected to him, then the
Son himself will be subject in his turn to the
One who subjected all things to him, so that
God may be all in all.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Blessings on him who comes in the name of
the Lord!**

**Blessings on the coming kingdom of our
father David!**

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 25:31-46

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of
Man comes in his glory, escorted by all
the angels, then he will take his seat on
his throne of glory. All the nations will be
assembled before him and he will separate
men one from another as the shepherd
separates sheep from goats. He will place the
sheep on his right hand and the goats on his
left. Then the King will say to those on his
right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has
blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom
prepared for you since the foundation of the
world. For I was hungry and you gave me
food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I
was a stranger and you made me welcome;
naked and you clothed me, sick and you
visited me, in prison and you came to see
me.' Then the virtuous will say to him in
reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry
and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink?
When did we see you a stranger and make

you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or
in prison and go to see you? And the King
will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far
as you did this to one of the least of these
brothers of mine, you did it to me.' Next he
will say to those on his left hand, 'Go away
from me, with your curse upon, to the eternal
fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For
I was hungry and you never gave me food; I
was thirsty and you never gave me anything
to drink; I was a stranger and you never made
me welcome, naked and you never clothed
me, sick and in prison and you never visited
me.' Then it will be their turn to ask, 'Lord,
when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a
stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did
not come to your help?' The he will answer, 'I
tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected
to do this to one of the least of these, you
neglected to do it to me.' And they will go
away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous
to eternal life."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**
(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we offer you, O Lord, the sacrifice
by which the human race is reconciled to you,
we humbly pray
that your Son himself may bestow on all
nations
the gifts of unity and peace.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Lord sits as King for ever.
The Lord will bless his people with peace.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the food of immortality,
we ask, O Lord,
that, glorying in obedience
to the commands of Christ, the King of the
universe,
we may live with him eternally in his
heavenly Kingdom.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.



THE LAST JUDGMENT

(MT 25:31-46)

Portal of the last judgment of Notre Dame de Paris, France

We come today to the final Sunday in the Church's year. The gospel presents us with a vision of the Last Judgment, when the Son of Man comes in glory.

We might note that all the (Gentile, that is, non-Jewish) nations are gathered before the throne of judgment. The charge sheet does not mention religious duties but rather social action, or lack of it. One way of looking at this text is to consider that it is dealing with the salvation of the Gentiles. The twelve apostles have been given the task of judging the twelve tribes of Israel; it is the place of the Son of Man to judge the Gentiles. The criterion is how the person has treated the poor, weak and vulnerable members of society. The surprise on the part of those who have shown mercy shows that there was no ulterior motive in their acting with compassion: it was simply the right thing to do for a fellow human being who was suffering. ■

REFLECT

Pope John Paul II once remarked that a society can be judged by how it treats its weakest members. Perhaps we might include in this category a range of vulnerable people: refugees, immigrants, unemployed people, the mentally ill, and so on. The common denominator in such groups, as in those mentioned in the scene of the Last Judgment, is that they are, in economic terms, non-productive and therefore regarded as not worth very much, 'the undeserving poor' as the expression used to be. Yet they have needs, and perhaps the most basic need is to be recognised as a human being, as a person. Pope Francis has spoken of the importance of seeing faces rather than just a vast number of anonymous figures. The need to be loved, to be cared for, to have someone listen to one's story is greater than the immediate material requirements, as anyone who spends time visiting the sick or those in prison soon discovers.

The Last Judgment deals with human values. If this is applied to gentiles, then it must be relevant to later gentile Christians as well. But the purpose is not to paint a picture of the end of time, but rather to spur us on to examine our lives in the here and now. The Bible emphasises the importance of social justice and care for vulnerable and neglected people. In this teaching, Jesus is deflecting his disciples' attention away from himself and onto the suffering members of society. Not only is he to be found among them, he is actually identifying himself with them, just as he identified himself with those on the margins of social and religious life when he shared table-fellowship with them and scandalised the respectable people of his day. Those who minister to persons in need often say that they receive more than they give: those who attend to suffering and marginalised people just because they are suffering and marginalised will be surprised at the recognition they receive. ■

SAY

Whatever you do to the least of my brothers or sisters, you do unto me. (Mt 25:40)

LEARN

The description of the Last Judgment is an apocalyptic vision rather than a parable.

Salvation for all people is presented as behaving in a decent human manner towards people in need.

Sheep and goats were often found in the same flock: goats needed more shelter at night.

DO

Find a way of helping someone mentioned in the list at the Last Judgment, or someone else who is in need of care or simple attention.

