

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.**

**PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you came to reconcile us to one another and to the Father:  
 Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**  
 Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division:  
 Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**  
 Lord Jesus, you intercede for us with your Father:  
 Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**  
 May almighty God have mercy on us,... **Amen.**

**THE 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**



**OPENING PRAYER**

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.....

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**FIRST READING Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20**

**A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.**  
 If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps. 118:1-2.4-5.17-18.33-34**

**R. They are happy who follow God's law!**

1. They are happy whose life is blameless, who follow God's law!  
 They are happy those who do his will, seeking him with all their hearts. **(R)**

2. You have laid down your precepts to be obeyed with care. May my footsteps be firm to obey your statutes. **(R)**
3. Bless your servant and I shall live and obey your word. Open my eyes that I may consider the wonders of your law. **(R)**
4. Teach me the demands of your statutes and I will keep them to the end. Train me to observe your law, to keep it with my heart. **(R)**



**SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 2: 6 - 10**

**A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians**  
 We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

**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 Matthew 5:20-22.27-28.33-34.37 (Shorter Form Only)**

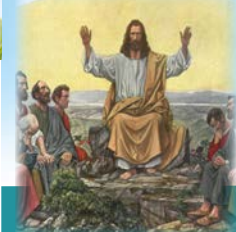
**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**  
 Jesus said to his disciples: 'I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court;

'You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

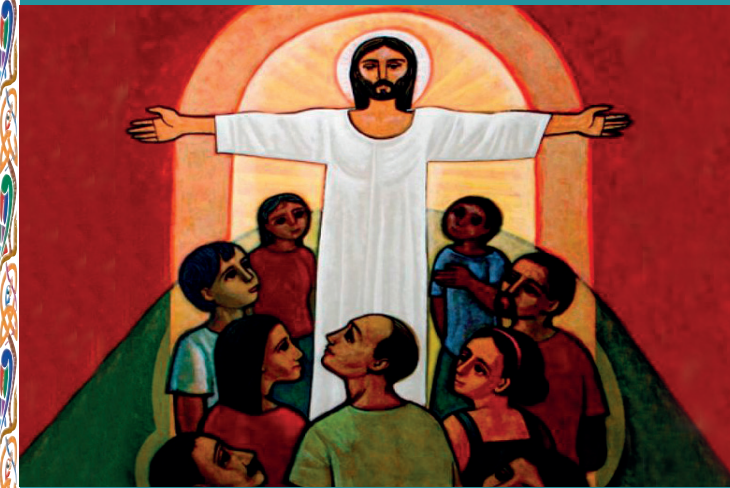
'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

**The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



**focus on sunday**

The gospel of Christ will often force difficult decisions in our lives. The gospel offers a fullness of life which in turn offers us joy and a meaning of life which promises a hope and love that is eternal.



**THE APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, All bow for following 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**

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

*Pray brothers and sisters, .....*  
 May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward. Through Christ our Lord.

**AFTER THE CONSECRATION**

*The mystery of faith.*  
**Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**God so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, so that all who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, that we may always long for that food by which we truly live. Through Christ our Lord.



A bit of criticism again from Jesus of the scribes and the Pharisees. Not a judgment about them personally but about their religion not going deep enough, and the fact that they didn't seem to notice that. They seemed happy

to keep the law even when it might become a huge burden to others. They never investigated the reason why people did religious things.

There is 'true religion' and 'false religion'. False religion has been used to promote war and violence over the centuries, and in fact still does so in many countries. Religion and Christianity have been used to violate the dignity and rights of many groups of people like the single parent, LGBT men and women and others over the years. True religion is the religion of the heart, rooted in compassion for all God's creation. Any religious practice like living by rules, participating in worship and our relationship with God is to come from the heart and from the desire only to do what God wants and give God first place in our lives.

The 'righteousness' of the people of Jesus's time sometimes came from the desire for power over others. True religion is humble and sees everyone as an equal child of God unlike the false religion, including clericalism, which puts traditionalism and its practices above compassion. This year we should strive to think synodally – to help develop a listening church which is open to the views of others.

As Pope Francis puts it:

"Let us not soundproof our certainties; let us not remain barricaded in our certainties....so often our certainties can make us closed. Let us listen to one another"

Lord, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

*Donal Neary SJ, Editor Sacred Heart Messenger.*