

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord.
Should they cry to me in any distress,
I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

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 founded all the commands of
your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbour,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.
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

Isaiah 55:6-9

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.
Let the wicked man abandon his way,
the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn back to the Lord who will take
pity on him,
to our God who is rich in forgiving;
for my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who
speaks.
Yes, the heavens are as high above earth
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 144

Response:

The Lord is close to all who call him.

- I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.
The Lord is great, highly to be praised,
his greatness cannot be measured. (R.)
- The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)

- The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts. (R.)

SECOND READING *Philippians 1:20-24,27*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Philippians.

Christ will be glorified in my body, whether
by my life or by my death. Life to me, of
course, is Christ, but then death would bring
me something more; but then again, if living
in this body means doing work which is
having good results – I do not know what I
should choose. I am caught in this dilemma:
I want to be gone and be with Christ, which
would be very much the better, but for me to
stay alive in this body is a more urgent need
for your sake.

Avoid anything in your everyday lives that
would be unworthy of the gospel of Christ.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessings on the King who comes,
in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest heavens!
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom
of heaven is like a landowner going out at
daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard.
He made an agreement with the workers
for one denarius a day, and sent them to
his vineyard. Going out at about the third
hour he saw others standing idle in the
market place and said to them, 'You go to
my vineyard too and I will give you a fair
wage.' So they went. At about the sixth
hour and again at about the ninth hour, he
went out and did the same. Then at about
the eleventh hour he went out and found
more men standing round, and he said to
them, 'Why have you been standing here
idle all day?' 'Because no one has hired us'
they answered. He said to them, 'You go
into my vineyard too.' In the evening, the
owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff,
'Call the workers and pay them their wages,
starting with the last arrivals and ending
with the first.' So those who were hired at
about the eleventh hour came forward and
received one denarius each. When the first
came, they expected to get more, but they
too received one denarius each. They took
it, but grumbled at the landowner. 'The men
who came last' they said 'have done only one
hour, and you have treated them the same as
us, though we have done a heavy day's work
in all the heat.' He answered one of them
and said, 'My friend, I am not being unjust
to you; did we not agree on one denarius?
Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay
the last-comer as much as I pay you. Have I
no right to do what I like with my own? Why
be envious because I am generous?' Thus the
last will be first, and the first, last."

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 with favour, O Lord, we pray,
the offerings of your people,
that what they profess with devotion and faith
may be theirs through these heavenly
mysteries.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have laid down your precepts to be
carefully kept;
may my ways be firm in keeping your
statutes.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously raise up, O Lord,
those you renew with this Sacrament,
that we may come to possess your
redemption
both in mystery and in the manner of our life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at
the church door, you will not find him in the
chalice.

St John Chrysostom

THE WORD

Today's Gospel passage tells of the workers in the vineyard who are hired
at different times of the day, and so put in unequal amounts of work.

At the end of the day, the foreman is told to pay the wages in reverse order to the time
when the labourers were employed, thus setting up the ones engaged at the beginning
of the day to expect a higher rate of pay. Most people probably feel some sympathy with
their indignant reaction on discovering that everyone receives the same remuneration.

Perhaps we might consider another point of view: that of the owner. It is not the fault of
the workers that they found no employment until the final hour before dusk. They have
indeed been "standing here idle all day", not because they were unwilling to work, but
as they tell the landowner, it is "because no one has hired us". They also have families to
feed, their needs are just as great as those of the others, who were probably younger and
fitter and so chosen first. The owner sees their willingness to work, but also their need,
and responds to that. In justice, the ones hired earlier have nothing to complain about
because they receive the amount to which they agreed: their fault lies in criticising the
owner for his generosity, and perhaps not appreciating the desperate situation and anxiety
of those who were earlier passed over by all those who could have helped them with a
day's employment. ■

REFLECT

In certain parts of the world today, the setting of this parable is acted out daily.
Gangs of people gather at a pick-up point, a lorry arrives, and those engaged
clamber aboard and are driven to a building site, roadworks or some agricultural
place of work. Such people have no assured employment, therefore no certain pay,
but they do have family responsibilities.

Translated into religious terms, we can see that there is a lesson here. It is tempting
for a person to think that having been a practising Christian for a long time
entitles them to some sort of special recognition. But the Gospel teaching is of
our expectations being reversed; that God does not think as we do. The parable is
concerned with the attitude of the owner. It is a trap: we instinctively, perhaps, side
with those individuals who have borne the heat of the day and are annoyed that the
most recent arrivals receive the same pay as they do. But the ones who come later
are not "shirkers": they just were not given the same chances as the others. The
Gospels show Jesus as being concerned with such people, those on the margins,
who are written off by those who are socially and religiously respectable. But the
master (God) does not write off this latter group either: rather he appeals to them to
change their attitude, to see the others' situation from a different point of view. God's
mercy extends to all, and there are no degrees of mercy. ■

DO

Make the sign of the cross with holy water:
ask the Lord for the grace to see others as
God sees them.

**LEARN**

The workers hired later are not "shirkers":
they have been available all day; it is not
their fault that no one has offered them work.

A theme throughout the Gospel tradition is
that of reversal, for instance, "the last will be
first and the first, last".

To be a disciple of Jesus is more important
than the length of time that a person has
been one.

SAY

**With the Lord there is
mercy, and plentiful
redemption**

(Psalm 130:7)