

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice;
turn to the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face.

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,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.
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 Exodus 22:20-26

A reading from the book of Exodus.
The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the sons of
Israel this, "You must not molest the stranger
or oppress him, for you lived as strangers
in the land of Egypt. You must not be harsh
with the widow, or with the orphan; if you
are harsh with them, they will surely cry out
to me, and be sure I shall hear their cry: my
anger will flare and I shall kill you with the
sword, your own wives will be widows, your
own children orphans.

"If you lend money to any of my people, to
any poor man among you, you must not play
the usurer with him: you must not demand
interest from him.

"If you take another's cloak as a pledge, you
must give it back to him before sunset. It is all
the covering he has; it is the cloak he wraps
his body in; what else would he sleep in? If
he cries to me, I will listen, for I am full of
pity."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 17

Response:
I love you, Lord, my strength.

1. I love you, Lord, my strength,
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.
My God is the rock where I take refuge;
my shield, my mighty help, my
stronghold.

The Lord is worthy of all praise:
when I call I am saved from my foes. (R.)

2. Long life to the Lord, my rock!
Praised be the God who saves me.
He has given great victories to his king
and shown his love for his anointed. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

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

You observed the sort of life we lived when
we were with you, which was for your
instruction, and you were led to become
imitators of us, and of the Lord; and it was
with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took
to the gospel, in spite of the great opposition
all round you. This has made you the great
example to all believers in Macedonia and
Achaia since it was from you that the word
of the Lord started to spread – and not only
throughout Macedonia and Achaia, for
the news of your faith in God has spread
everywhere. We do not need to tell other
people about it: other people tell us how we
started the work among you, how you broke
with idolatry when you were converted to
God and became servants of the real, living
God; and how you are now waiting for Jesus,
his Son, whom he raised from the dead,
to come from heaven to save us from the
retribution which is coming.

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 Matthew 22:34-40

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had
silenced the Sadducees they got together
and, to disconcert him, one of them put a
question, "Master, which is the greatest
commandment of the Law?" Jesus said,
"You must love the Lord your God with all
your heart, with all your soul, and with all
your mind. This is the greatest and the first
commandment. The second resembles it: you
must love your neighbour as yourself. On
these two commandments hang the whole
Law, and the Prophets also."

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

Look, we pray, O Lord,
on the offerings we make to your majesty,
that whatever is done by us in your service
may be directed above all to your glory.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

We will ring out our joy at your saving help
and exult in the name of our God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray,
perfect in us what lies within them,
that what we now celebrate in signs
we may one day possess in truth.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

You say grace before meals. All right. But I
say grace before the concert and the opera,
and grace before the play and pantomime,
and grace before I open a book, and grace
before sketching, painting, swimming,
fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing
and grace before I dip the pen in the ink.

G.K. Chesterton

THE WORD

In today's Gospel reading, we find another discussion between
Jesus and his opponents, this time the Pharisees. It centres on
which of the commandments is the greatest.

Matthew agrees with Mark that love of God and love of neighbour constitute the chief and
basic commandment; that this is, in a way, a summary of the entire Torah. But Matthew
goes further: he puts these two commandments on an equal footing, and presents them
as supporting the rest. He uses the verb "hang" to express the idea of these two being the
ropes which hold up the rest. His reply is perfectly orthodox, and Jewish Christians would
be able to defend themselves on this basis.

Matthew shows that permeating religious practice must be love: love of God and our
fellow human beings, and that both are equally important. In a sense, this is his version of
the Golden Rule. ■

REFLECT

Matthew the evangelist is usually understood as being a tax collector, called
by Jesus to leave his profession and become one of Jesus' disciples. This
traditional view has been expressed in art down the centuries. It may well be
the historical fact, but it is unlikely that someone from such a background could have
produced such a scholarly work, which we know as the Gospel according to Matthew:
it betrays too deep a knowledge of the Jewish scriptures. There is another possibility
about his identity, that he was, in fact, a convert Jewish scribe, "who brings out from
his storeroom things both new and old" (Matthew 13:52 may offer this description of
the author of the Gospel).

To Jewish converts, the place of the Law, which they had regarded as their way
of responding to the Lord's covenant with Israel, must have been a question of
the highest importance. By the time Matthew is writing, the Temple has been
destroyed, the political influence of the Jewish people in the land has disappeared,
and the Law has provided the core of their sense of identity. Does this have to be,
at best, abandoned, or, at worst, repudiated because they have accepted Jesus and
his message? The answer of the earliest disciples seems to have been "No", as
they continued to frequent the Temple. Although there was eventually an official
excommunication of Jewish Christians from the synagogue, it is likely that Jewish
traditions continued to influence communities such as Matthew's. The lesson that
love of God and neighbour should be the force which informs all the outward
observing of our own traditions today, that there is no essential conflict between law
and love, is as valid today as it was when Matthew wrote his Gospel. ■

SAY

The greatest
commandment is to love
God and my neighbour.

LEARN

The rabbis calculated 613 commandments in
the Torah: 248 positive and 365 negative.

After the destruction of the Temple and the
end of animal sacrifice, observing the Law
took on even greater significance in Jewish
life than before.

Not all the commandments were of equal
weight: some were classified as "heavy"
(more important), others as "light" (less so).

DO

Reflect that when you come to celebrate the
Eucharist, you are supporting your fellow
parishioners as well as expressing your
commitment to the Lord.

