

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Forsake me not, O Lord, my God;
be not far from me!
Make haste and come to my help,
O Lord, my strong salvation!

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 and merciful God,
by whose gift your faithful offer you
right and praiseworthy service,
grant, we pray,
that we may hasten without stumbling
to receive the things you have promised.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 6:2-6

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.
Moses said to the people: "If you fear the
Lord your God all the days of your life and
if you keep all his laws and commandments
which I lay on you, you will have a long life,
you and your son and your grandson. Listen
then, Israel, keep and observe what will make
you prosper and give you great increase, as
the Lord God of your fathers has promised
you, giving you a land where milk and honey
flow.

"Listen, Israel: The Lord our God is the one
Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with
all your heart, with all your soul, with all your
strength. Let these words I urge on you today
be written on your heart."

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 Hebrews 7:23-28

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

There used to be a great number of priests
under the former covenant, because death
put an end to each one of them; but this
one, Christ, because he remains for ever, can
never lose his priesthood. It follows then,
that his power to save is utterly certain, since
he is living for ever to intercede for all who
come to God through him.

To suit us, the ideal high priest would have
to be holy, innocent and uncontaminated,
beyond the influence of sinners, and raised
up above the heavens; one who would not
need to offer sacrifices every day, as the
other high priests do for their own sins and
then for those of the people, because he has
done this once and for all by offering himself.
The Law appoints high priests who are men
subject to weakness; but the promise on
oath, which came after the Law, appointed
the Son who is made perfect for ever.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 12:28-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

One of the scribes came up to Jesus and
put a question to him, "Which is the first
of all the commandments?" Jesus replied,
"This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our
God is the one Lord, and you must love the
Lord your God with all your heart, with all
your soul, with all your mind and with all
your strength. The second is this: You must
love your neighbour as yourself. There is
no commandment greater than these." The
scribe said to him, "Well spoken, Master;
what you have said is true: that he is one
and there is no other. To love him with all
your heart, with all your understanding
and strength and to love your neighbour as
yourself, this is far more important than any
holocaust or sacrifice." Jesus, seeing how
wisely he had spoken, said, "You are not far
from the kingdom of God." And after that no
one dared to question him any more.

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

May these sacrificial offerings, O Lord,
become for you a pure oblation,
and for us a holy outpouring of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence, O Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the working of your power, O Lord,
increase in us, we pray,
so that, renewed by these heavenly
Sacraments,
we may be prepared by your gift
for receiving what they promise.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Unless we look at a person and see the
beauty that is in them, we can contribute
nothing to them. One does not help a person
by discerning what is wrong, what is ugly,
what is distorted. Christ looked at everyone
he met, at the prostitute, at the thief, and
saw the beauty hidden there. Perhaps it
was distorted, perhaps damaged, but it was
beauty none the less, and what he did was to
call out this beauty.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

THE WORD**A FRIENDLY EXCHANGE**

(MARK 12:28-34)

Jesus has reached and entered Jerusalem. This is the lair of his opponents, the chief priests, elders and scribes whom he has mentioned as responsible for what will happen to him in the Holy City.

It is therefore perhaps a little surprising that, in this setting, we hear of a perfectly friendly and mutually respectful exchange between Jesus and one of the scribes. There is no hint of hostility or Jesus being put on the spot (as we find in Matthew and Luke's versions of the incident). The scribe's question would be a normal one put to any teacher of the Law. The scholar agrees with Jesus' interpretation and Jesus praises him for his perceptive attitude. Hebrew thought does not divide the person into body and soul but sees the human being as a whole, so the mention of loving with one's "heart, soul, mind and strength" is emphasising the complete dedication of the individual to God. The scribe's approving repetition of Jesus' reply adds the comment that to love God and one's neighbour is "far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice", a teaching which we find in the Hebrew Bible. This episode gives us a unique glimpse into Jesus, the orthodox Jewish rabbi, in friendly discussion with an advanced student on a point of theology, on which they are both of one mind. Jesus' final remark that his companion is "not far from the kingdom of God" reminds us that the teaching of Jesus is summed up as "the kingdom of God is at hand" and, in a sense, present in Jesus. If the scribe puts into practice what he believes, then he will truly enter the kingdom. ■

REFLECT

One of the more worrying developments in recent times has been the dividing of society into hostile groups which seem unable to communicate with one another. It is true that throughout history people have demonised others different to themselves on the basis of language, culture, colour or religion. Sometimes a comment is made along the lines of "X is a ___", but a very nice person!" This can be said with a tone of pleasant surprise that X

has proved to be different from what the speaker expected. Some time ago, there were peace talks beginning between two groups, and everyone expected the discussions to be very difficult. What changed the atmosphere completely was that the participants brought their families with them and the respective children got on so well with each other that the adults began to see one another in a completely different light.

SAY

"This is what the Lord asks of you: act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God."
(Micah 6:8)

LEARN

The scribes were scholars who were very much part of the religious and political establishment in Jerusalem.

Other members were the chief priests and elders – not the Pharisees.

Loving one's neighbour as oneself means showing the same care and concern for the other's well-being as one takes care of one's own needs.

DO

Remember that loving your neighbour is not about emotions or feelings: it is about treating the other person properly and thoughtfully. Think about that during the coming week.



At the mention of the scribe, Mark's readers may well expect another unpleasant confrontation between Jesus and his critics, but this scholar turns out to be quite different from the usual stereotyped presentation. Perhaps this extract might warn us against making easy assumptions about any other person or group. The other characters in the story may well have gone away thinking, "He was a scribe – but actually a very nice person!" ■