

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

My eyes are always on the Lord,
for he rescues my feet from the snare.
Turn to me and have mercy on me,
for I am alone and poor.

COLLECT

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving
have shown us a remedy for sin,
look graciously on this confession of our
lowliness,
that we, who are bowed down by our
conscience,
may always be lifted up by your mercy.
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

Ex 3:1-8, 13-15

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led his flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. 'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses said, 'and see why the bush is not burnt.' Now the Lord saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am,' he answered. 'Come no nearer,' he said. 'Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your fathers,' he said, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God. And the Lord said, 'I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave-drivers. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and honey flow.

Then Moses said to God, 'I am to go, then, to the sons of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you." But if they ask me what his name is, what am I to tell them?' And God said to Moses, 'I Am who I Am. This' he added 'is what you must say to the sons of Israel: "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you." This is my name for all time; by this name I shall be invoked for all generations to come.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 102 (103):1-4, 6-8, 11

Response:

The Lord is compassion and love.

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings. (R.)
2. It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion.
(R.)

3. The Lord does deeds of justice,
gives judgement for all who are oppressed.
He made known his ways to Moses
and his deeds to Israel's sons. (R.)
4. The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him.
(R.)

SECOND READING

1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12

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

I want to remind you, brothers, how our fathers were all guided by a cloud above them and how they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in this cloud and in this sea; all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, since they all drank from the spiritual food and all drank from the spiritual rock that followed them as they went, and that rock was Christ. In spite of this, most of them failed to please God and their corpses littered the desert.

These things all happened as warnings for us, not to have the wicked lusts for forbidden things that they had. You must never complain: some of them did, and they were killed by the Destroyer.

All this happened to them as a warning and it was written down to be a lesson for us who are living at the end of the age. The man who thinks he is safe must be careful that he does not fall.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!
Repent, says the Lord,
for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.
Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

GOSPEL

Lk 13:1-9

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, "Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did."

He told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, 'Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down.'"

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

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings,
and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins,
may take care to forgive our neighbour.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and
my God.
Blesses are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.

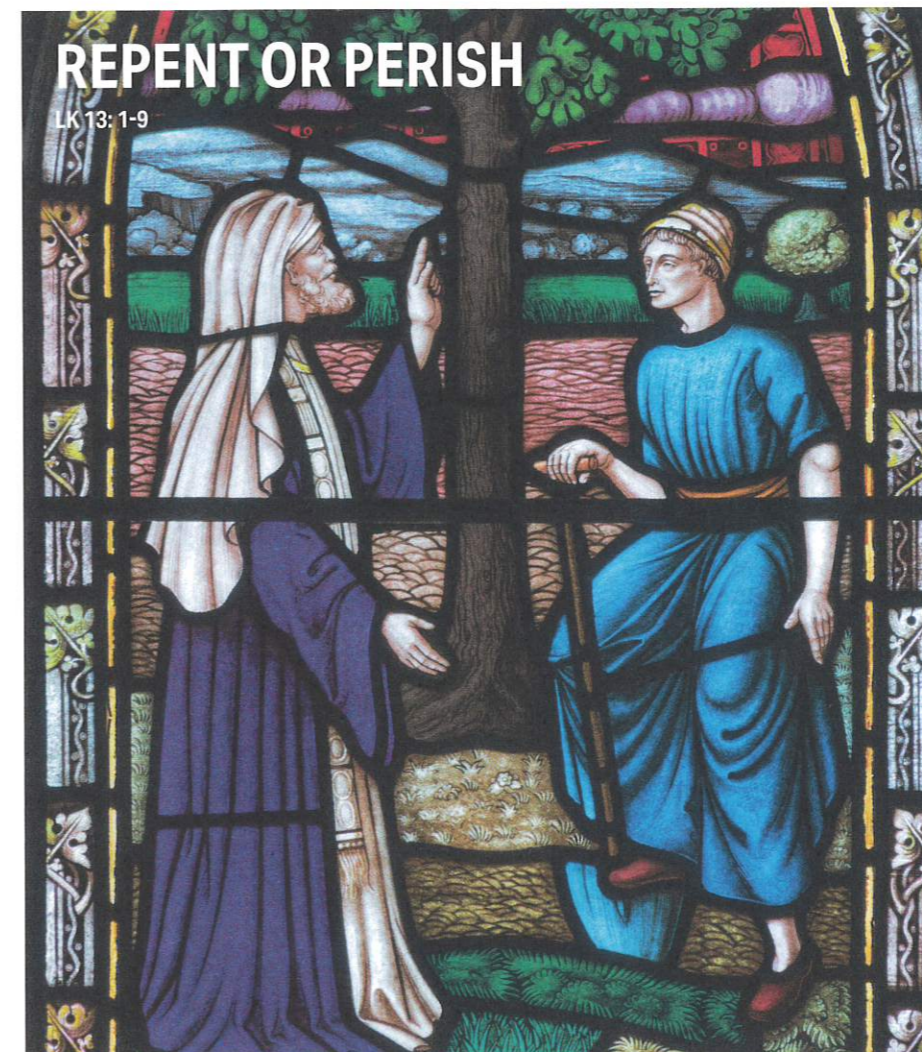
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive the pledge
of things yet hidden in heaven
and are nourished while still on earth
with the Bread that comes from on high,
we humbly entreat you, O Lord,
that what is being brought about in us in
mystery
may come to true completion.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful,
and in your kindness grant your servants this
grace:
that, abiding in the love of you and their
neighbour,
they may fulfil the whole of your commands.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday Message

THE WORD

The parable of the Fig tree on the stained glass in St Mary Abbot's church on Kensington High Street

Two examples are given by Jesus today when talking about sin and suffering in our world.

Firstly, he speaks of the time Pilate constructed a much needed aqueduct for Jerusalem, with many people outraged at his use of sacred money to build it. So Pilate instructed his soldiers to mingle amongst the crowd with clubs hidden beneath their cloaks. Their job was to beat the Galileans into submission. A task they took on with such enthusiasm, that many were killed. The ones who were killed, says Jesus, weren't necessarily more wicked than those who lived.

In the second example, Jesus tells the parable of the fig tree. The Book of Revelation, compares the falling of the stars from the sky at the end of the world, with the falling of the figs from this tree. The fig tree in this story is a reminder of the two kinds of human being: those who give and those who take. Those who only take have to justify their existence. To accept Christ's message is to be open to conversion. ■

LEARN

'Lent is a season of conversion and a time of freedom.' (Pope Francis)

DO

Take the opportunity this Lent to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

REFLECT

March 19th is the day we celebrated one of the great Saints in our Church, St. Joseph. He was the consistent presence in the background of the Gospels, where Jesus found his home, his stability, his growth and learning and wisdom. Joseph the silent worker, preaching by his actions, preaching by his simple presence.

Francis of Assisi once invited a young friar to go with him into town to preach. Francis and the young friar spent all day walking through the streets and then came home. When the day's journey was done, the young friar was disappointed and asked "Weren't we supposed to preach today?" Francis replied, "Son, we have preached. We were preaching while we were walking. We were seen by many and our behaviour was noted. It is of no use walking anywhere to preach unless we preach wherever as we walk!" He summed up his idea in these words "Preach the Gospel everywhere, and if necessary, use words." To him witnessing to Jesus wasn't merely quoting some words out of the Bible from time to time but one who lives by the word of God each day.

The gardener in the Gospel asked the owner of the vineyard to give the barren fig tree another chance to produce fruit. He promised to dig around it and manure it, to give it one last chance to prove itself. It suggests that we too need to nurture our faith and commit ourselves to being helpful to the lives of others.

Perhaps like St. Joseph, we're that simple presence – offering hope and comfort and love to those around us. ■

SAY

Lord, if we possessed a part of the patience that you give to us, then this world would be transformed.