

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON
Within your will, O Lord, all things are established,
and there is none that can resist your will.
For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth,
and all that is held within the circle of heaven;
you are the Lord of all.

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,
who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.
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

Is 5:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah
Let me sing to my friend
the song of his love for his vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
He dug the soil, cleared it of stones
and planted choice vines in it.
In the middle he built a tower,
he dug a press there too.
He expected it to yield grapes,
but sour grapes were all that it gave.
And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
I ask you to judge
between my vineyard and me.
What could I have done for my vineyard
that I have not done?
I expected it to yield grapes.
Why did it yield sour grapes instead?
Very well, I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on,
and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on.
I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug;
overgrown by the briar and the thorn.
I will command the clouds
to rain no rain on it.
Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts
is the House of Israel,
and the men of Judah
that chosen plant.

He expected justice, but found bloodshed,
integrity, but only a cry of distress.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 79:9,12-16,19-20

Response:

The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel.

1. You brought a vine out of Egypt;
to plant it you drove out the nations.
It stretched out its branches to the sea,
to the Great River it stretched out its shoots. (R.)
2. Then why have you broken down its walls?
It is plucked by all who pass by.
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,
devoured by the beasts of the field. (R.)
3. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. (R.)
4. And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name.
God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved. (R.)

SECOND READING

Phil 4:6-9

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
I call you friends, says the Lord,
because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 21:33-43

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son" he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance." So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and

killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone. This was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see?'

'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

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

Accept, O Lord, we pray,
the sacrifices instituted by your commands
and, through the sacred mysteries,
which we celebrate with dutiful service,
graciously complete the sanctifying work
by which you are pleased to redeem us.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord is good to those who hope in him,
to the soul that seeks him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us, almighty God,
that we may be refreshed and nourished
by the Sacrament which we have received,
so as to be transformed into what we consume.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday Message

THE WORD



St Matthew uses the parable in today's Gospel to summarise the story of God's relationship with God's people. The characters in the story are symbolic. The landlord represents God, the tenants are the people of Israel, and the servants are the prophets, whom God has continually sent to Israel to remind the people of their true destiny. All of them were rejected and despised.

Finally, God sends his son Jesus, who, like the son in the parable, will be murdered by those to whom he came. The landlord will punish the tenants by leasing the vineyard to new tenants. This is Matthew's way of telling his readers that the Kingdom of God will be given to the Gentiles, the outsiders, as it were, those who weren't part of the original story. Since the Son has been rejected by the people he came for, he must go to others instead.

The parable is also a reminder of God's patience. In the Old Testament, the people of Israel kept turning their backs on God. But God never gives up on them, never abandons them. Over and over again, God makes allowances for them and forgives them. This is what distinguished the God of Abraham from other gods of antiquity, who were indifferent, capricious, and casually cruel. Israel's God is the God of endless patience, of infinite second chances, always ready to welcome the prodigal home. In the end, God even sent his Son among us to save us, to lead us home.

Jesus displayed similar patience. People resisted his message; many opposed him; even his closest friends misunderstood him. He must have been desperately frustrated and disappointed with them, but Jesus never gave up on them. Even after Peter denied him three times, Jesus welcomed him back.

God shows that same patience towards each one of us. Even when we keep letting God down and turning our backs on God, even when we disappoint and exasperate him, God is always ready to forgive and forget, to accept us with open arms. ■

REFLECT

There's no doubt about it, practising patience has never been more difficult. We live in a culture of wanting things now, one of instant gratification. Waiting is a challenge. And not just the sort of anxiety-filled waiting we're obliged to do in an overcrowded A&E, but any kind of waiting. Many of us suffer from road rage, all for the sake of gaining a few extra minutes. Having to sit at a red light annoys us; being stuck in a barely moving queue frustrates us. If our internet connection is down or slow, we get angry. Regular broadband is no longer sufficient; we need high-speed broadband. We're intolerant of inconvenience and discomfort.

The letter 'I' in 'internet' stands not just for me, the individual, but also for instant

- instant access, instant news, instant communication, instant entertainment, instant titillation - available immediately, right now, this very second. As with instant messaging, instant coffee, and ready-made meals, we demand immediate results, and we want them now.

It can be the same with our relationships. If a relationship is in difficulty, we can be tempted to give up on it. Caring for sick or elderly loved ones can test our endurance, our tolerance. If things start to go wrong for us professionally - maybe there are problems at work, or a promotion isn't coming, or our ambitions are being frustrated - we can get angry or feel like quitting.

DO

Try to be more patient with people at home, at work, and on the roads this week.

SAY

"Lord, I thank you for your patience with me. Help me to draw closer to you every day. Amen."

PRAY

In today's fast-paced, super-competitive world, practising patience has never been more challenging. Pray for the virtue of patience, if you need it.



LEARN

God never stops giving us the chance to turn back towards him

God always sees the good in us, our potential; God never rejects anyone

God's message is intended for everyone

So also with our religion. Scandals in the church, impatience with the pace of reform, or disappointment with the clergy can leave us feeling fed up and inclined to walk away. When God is slow to answer our prayers or doesn't appear to answer them at all, we can be tempted to stop praying or even to abandon God altogether.

Our pilgrim journey requires patience. Despite our best efforts, we're not going to become saints overnight, become perfect in a flash, reach heaven unscathed. We are human; we are frail; we make mistakes; we flounder and founder. Knowing that God is always patiently with us, walking alongside us every step of the way, we learn to be patient with ourselves and patient with each other. ■