

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,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Ex 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

Ps 17:2-4,47,51

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 Th 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

Mt 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.

Behold O kind and most sweet Jesus, I cast
myself upon my knees in your sight while with
deep affection and grief of soul I mentally
contemplate your five most precious wounds,
having before my eyes the words that David the
prophet spoke about you, most sweet Jesus:
"They have pierced my hands and feet, and I
can count everyone of my bones." Traditional
prayer (before a crucifix) to be said after
Communion.

Sunday Message

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 25 October 2026 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 2



The Pharisees prided themselves on strict observance of the law. So meticulous were they in keeping it, they had worked out that the biblical law contained 365 negative commandments (one 'thou shalt not' for every day of the year) and 248 positive commandments (one for every bone in the human body).

In addition to this written law, they believed that God had given Moses another set of laws that weren't written down but were passed down by an unbroken chain from Moses to them.

Some Pharisees taught that every commandment was to be observed with the same attention to detail. Others taught that the commandments ranged from serious to relatively minor. This debate provides the background to today's Gospel. By asking Jesus' opinion, his opponents are also inviting him to line up on one side or the other in the debate.

Jesus answers by quoting a verse from the Book of Deuteronomy that every member of his audience would know (Dt. 6:5). It was part of the prayer they said twice each day, the Shema Yisrael ('Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one...'). He then adds a verse that 'resembles this' – the command to love your neighbour as yourself (Leviticus 18:2). On these two verses, he says, hang the whole of the Law and the Prophets, that is, God's entire revelation to his people. This is the law that matters. ■

REFLECT

We use the word 'love' with easy abandon today. Think of the casual way we throw it around. We love our bed, our favourite TV soap, our new shoes. We love salt with our chips, sugar in our tea, and a trip to the cinema. I love everything that's bad for me, according to my cardiologist. Love is desire, obsession, addiction, commitment, lust, service; love is whatever we want it to be.

But if we Christians want to know what love truly is, we need only look to God. God is love, St John tells us. God not only loves, God is love. And where there is love, there is God.

In her book Reading Genesis, Marilynne Robinson points out that this Godly love is what distinguished the God of Israel from other Middle Eastern gods of antiquity. The Babylonians and others believed in multiple gods; Abraham and his descendants were unique in being monotheists, in believing there is but one God, who had created them in God's very own image. We are not images of angels or lesser gods but of the creator himself. This was a radical way of thinking.

The other gods of antiquity were remote, distant, and indifferent to the happenings here on earth. The God of Genesis is a

benign God who forgives Cain for the murder of his own brother, forgives his people time and again, and is personally invested in them, unlike the apathetic or vengeful gods that other peoples worshipped. Israel's God is slow to anger, rich in mercy, abiding in love.

God, Robinson says, has a lofty view of humankind, expressed poetically in Psalm 8: "What is man that you are mindful of him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour."

God loves, and God is love. But, when we say this, we're not describing an up in the sky kind of love. We're describing the kind of concrete love that Jesus showed.

People practise this kind of love every day. Think of parents who care for children with special needs. Or grandparents who pick up the pieces when their child's marriage collapses. Or groups like the St Vincent de Paul, who help the most needy. All of these put love into practice every day.

I like to break down the great commandment into its three parts. We are to:

DO

This week visit someone who is lonely or who lives alone.

SAY

"Lord, help me to love you
and my neighbour to the best
of my ability."

PRAY

Pray for your parish community, that all will grow in love of God and one another.

LEARN

Love of God and neighbour is the mark of the Christian

At the heart of our faith is that knowledge that God loves us without reservation

* love ourselves. Healthy self-love comes from knowing I am made in God's own image. Healthy self-love is not the same as selfishness or narcissism. It is to see myself the way God sees me, as one made in God's own image. Therefore, I am unique, lovable, irreplaceable. Many of us find it hard to love ourselves. Young people, influenced by social media, find it so hard to love themselves. But if we are to love God and others, we must learn to love ourselves.

* love our neighbour. To love is to will the good of another. It is to go out of our way for others. "Feed the poor." That's love. "Break bread with those no one will sit with." That's love. "Respond with patience to someone who gets on my nerves." That's love. Love of neighbour means never being bystanders. More than anything else, God will judge us on whether we loved others.

* love God. God created us out of love, and sustains us lovingly each day. We return God's love through a life of prayer, worship and good works.

St Paul instructed the Ephesians to 'live a life of love.' Three little words beginning with the letter L. Easy to remember. Hard to do. That's how we keep the great commandment. ■