

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield;
and look on the face of your anointed one;
one day within your courts
is better than a thousand elsewhere.

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

O God, who have prepared for those who love
you
good things which no eye can see,
fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your
love,
so that, loving you in all things and above all
things,
we may attain your promises,
which surpass every human desire.
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

Jer 38:4-6, 8-10

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

The king's leading men spoke to the king. 'Let Jeremiah be put to death: he is unquestionably disheartening the remaining soldiers in the city, and all the people too, by talking like this. The fellow does not have the welfare of this people at heart so much as its ruin.' 'He is in your hands as you know,' King Zedekiah answered 'for the king is powerless against you.' So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the well of Prince Malchiah in the Court of the Guard, letting him down with ropes. There was no water in the well, only mud, and into the mud Jeremiah sank. Ebed-melech came out from the palace and spoke to the king. 'My lord king,' he said 'these men have done a wicked thing by treating the prophet Jeremiah like this: they have thrown him into the well where he will die.' At this the king gave Ebed-melech the Cushite the following order: 'Take three men with you from here and pull the prophet Jeremiah out of the well before he dies.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 39 (40):2-4, 18

Response:

Lord, come to my aid!

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry. (R.)
2. He drew me from the deadly pit,
from the miry clay.
He set my feet upon a rock
and made my footsteps firm. (R.)
3. He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God.
Many shall see and fear
and shall trust in the Lord. (R.)
4. As for me, wretched and poor,
the Lord thinks of me.
You are my rescuer, my help,
O God, do not delay. (R.)

SECOND READING

Heb 12:1-4

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then, should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, disregarding the shamefulness of it, and from now on has taken his place at the right of God's throne. Think of the way he stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of death.

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

Lk 12:49-53

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

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

Receive our oblation, O Lord,
by which is brought about a glorious exchange,
that, by offering what you have given,
we may merit to receive your very self.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**With the Lord there is mercy;
in him is plentiful redemption.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Made partakers of Christ through these
Sacraments,
we humbly implore your mercy, Lord,
that, conformed to his image on earth,
we may merit also to be his coheirs in heaven.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

Father in heaven, you have made us for yourself;
our hearts are restless until they rest in you.
Fulfil this longing through Jesus, the bread of
life, so that we may witness to him who alone
satisfies the hungers of the human family. By
the power of your Spirit lead us to the heavenly
table where we may feast on the vision of your
glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday Message

20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 17 August 2025 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 4

TOUGH WORDS

LUKE 12:49-53

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and crucifixion. He has been preparing his disciples for what lies ahead.

Today's Gospel can be divided into two parts. In the first, Jesus expresses his deepest desires and, in the second, he prepares his followers for the shaking of their faith's foundations that will lie ahead.

There are two clear images in the first section – the blazing fire cast on the earth and the unique baptism Jesus is about to undergo.

"I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it was already ablaze," he says. Luke uses the symbol of fire in two different senses. In some cases, fire stands as a symbol of divine judgment. In others, it represents the Holy Spirit who comes down on the disciples at Pentecost as tongues of fire. Elijah was the fiery prophet of the Old Testament. When a Samaritan town refuses to receive Jesus and his disciples, James and John wonder should they command fire to fall from heaven and consume them (Luke 9:54). Jesus refuses the offer but there are other places in the Gospel where he himself uses fire as a symbol of the coming judgment. If we read the verse in today's Gospel in this sense, it means that Jesus longs for the final judgment of God that will be associated with his death and resurrection. It is not a destructive judgment, however, but a life-giving one in which the fire of the Spirit will renew the face of the earth.

Jesus then speaks of a baptism he must receive and that he is in 'great distress' until he has received it. It is important not to confuse this baptism with a religious ritual such as that performed by John the Baptist. In Greek, baptism literally means to be dipped, submerged, or even drowned. The baptism that awaits Jesus is death. He must abandon himself to it totally like a person being drowned in deep waters. This prospect fills him with anguish and distress.

The second part of the Gospel concerns the disciples. If Jesus is to face death, they must be ready to face division and opposition even within their own families. That is the cost they must pay for following him. Families themselves will be divided over their allegiance to Jesus. They need to be aware that following him faithfully comes at a price. They need to be prepared to pay the cost. ■

LEARN

Today's Gospel reminds us that Christianity is not a cosy, comfortable, undemanding religion. It involves sometimes having to make hard choices, choices that cost.

SAY

"Lord, I thank you for the gift of faith. Never let me weaken in my commitment to it. Amen."

DO

Think about your faith. How does it impact on your life day-to-day? Does it cost you in any real way?



PRAY

Say the words of the creed with extra conviction today, aware that this is your faith, and aware of the demands that living the faith makes on you.

REFLECT

Every night when I was growing up, we prayed the family Rosary, at the end of which other prayers were added. One of these began "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, come to me a little child."

It portrays an image of Jesus as soft and retiring, the type of chap who wouldn't swat a fly. I said it, as I said so many prayers, without really dwelling on the words.

Gentle, meek and mild is one image we may have of Jesus, but it is not accurate. There is nothing soft or submissive about the Jesus of the Gospels.

A meek and mild Jesus would never have attracted criticism from the powers that be. A meek and mild Jesus would never have

been seen as a threat to the established religious and social order. A meek and mild Jesus would never have been arrested and executed as a dangerous rabble-rouser.

But this is what happened to Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus spoke the truth – at whatever the cost to himself. He preached a message of tolerance, forgiveness and inclusion that upset many. He challenged injustice and greed. He said the law should be at the service of people and not the other way around, which annoyed the legalists. And he offered an image of God as not a remote and distant deity whose name could not even be uttered, but as a loving parent we should address intimately.

Jesus upset the religious and social applecart. That's why he ended up on a cross. That's why he could never be described as meek and mild.

And that's the Jesus we meet in today's Gospel. "Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." And he talks of households being divided and family members at odds over him and his message.

It is a stark reminder to his disciples and to us: Following Jesus means having to make hard choices. It means sometimes having to go against popular opinion; sometimes it means going against our friends and even our family. ■