

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON
God is in his holy place,
God who unites those who dwell in his house;
he himself gives might and strength to his people.

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, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation,
nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure.
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 Gen 18:20-32

A reading from the book of Genesis

The Lord said, 'How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! How grievous is their sin! I propose to go down and see whether or not they have done all that is alleged in the outcry against them that has come up to me. I am determined to know.'

The men left there and went to Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Approaching him he said, 'Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. Will you really overwhelm them, will you not spare the place for the fifty just men in it? Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think of it! Will the judge of the whole earth not administer justice?' the Lord replied, 'If at Sodom I find fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them.'

Abraham replied, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this to my Lord, I who am dust and ashes. But perhaps the fifty just men lack five: will you destroy the whole city for five?' 'No,' he replied 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five just men there.' Again Abraham said to him, 'Perhaps there will only be forty there.' 'I will not do it' he replied 'for the sake of the forty.'

Abraham said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak: perhaps there will only be thirty there.' 'I will not do it' he replied 'if I find thirty there.' He said, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this, but perhaps there will only be twenty there.' 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake of the twenty.' He said, 'I

trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: perhaps there will only be ten.' 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake of the ten.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Ps 137:1-3, 6-8

Response:
On the day I called, you answered me, O Lord.

1. I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
Before the angels I will bless you.
I will adore before your holy temple. (R.)
2. I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. (R.)
3. The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly
and the haughty he knows from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of affliction
you give me life and frustrate my foes. (R.)
4. You stretch out your hand and save me,
your hand will do all things for me.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. (R.)

SECOND READING Col 2:12-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians

You have been buried with Christ, when you were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. You were dead, because you were sinners and had not been circumcised: he has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us all our sins. He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
Alleluia, alleluia! The Word was made flesh and lived among us:
to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Lk 11:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'

He said to them, 'Say this when you pray: "Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test."' He also said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him"; and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give it you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

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 offerings which we bring from the abundance of your gifts, that through the powerful working of your grace these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our present way of life and lead us to eternal gladness. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament, the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son; grant, we pray, that this gift, which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sunday Message

THE WORD



SAY A LITTLE PRAYER

LK 11:1-13

Throughout his Gospel, Luke devotes a lot of time to the prayer of Jesus. He presents Jesus as the best model of how to pray as well as a teacher of prayer. Today's Gospel combines both of these aspects: when the disciples see Jesus at prayer, they ask him to teach them how to pray.

Jesus responds first by teaching them a form of prayer. For those of us used to the Our Father, Luke's words might seem unusual. The church has taken its official form of the Lord's Prayer from St Matthew's version. The differences are not great. Matthew's version is longer than Luke's and more polished. Luke's may be closer to what Jesus originally taught the disciples.

The prayer is followed by a parable about a neighbour who refuses to take no for an answer. A couple of details about houses in the Galilean countryside at the time of Jesus might help to make it clearer. The entire family normally spread their sleeping mats on a raised platform at one end of the living room and curled up for a night's sleep close to one another. (Only the rich could afford separate bedrooms.) When bedtime came, the one lamp the family owned was extinguished. Lighting it again was a chore. The best one might hope for was that the cooking fire outside the house still had enough embers to kindle it. The door was fastened with a massive wooden bar and the key was an unwieldy object.

A visitor knocking after the family had gone to bed wasn't welcome. Getting up to open the door meant clambering over sleeping children and babies. Opening the door in the dark wasn't easy. One can imagine Jesus' hearers smiling at the stupidity of a neighbour who would cause such chaos. But this man isn't put off. His incessant knocking will waken the children anyway, not to mention any dog or neighbour within earshot. With bad grace, the father hands over the loaf, not for friendship's sake, but just to get rid of him.

The third part of the Gospel uses the parable's key words as an instruction on prayer. Prayer is asking, it is searching; it is, if necessary, banging on the door until God hears you. This homely parable, although true to life, runs the risk of presenting God as a grudging giver, so Jesus adds two little examples of fatherly concern that hark back to the opening word of the prayer, 'Abba' – the intimate name for addressing one's father. Good fathers don't play dangerous games with their children, giving them stones instead of bread or snakes or scorpions for eggs or fish.

The message is clear: if we call God Abba, then God will give us not just what we ask for but will even share the life of his Spirit with us. ■

DO

Distractions are a constant challenge to prayer. When it happens just refocus, and get back on track.

PRAY

Pray for those for whom prayer is difficult or who have given up on God.

REFLECT

In today's first reading, Abraham pleads with God, like a defence counsel before a judge. Abraham isn't afraid to tell God exactly what he wants, to come straight out and say it. He is persistent – and his prayer works. It is clear that Abraham has a deep and intimate friendship with God.

St Teresa of Avila said that prayer should be like a conversation with a friend who knows you even better than you know yourself. How many of us do that? How many of us see God as a companion on the journey through life?

We don't just go to a friend when we want something – to borrow money or the lawnmower. We go to a friend for joy, comfort, companionship, affirmation, advice, love.

We go to our friends because they enrich us and challenge us. And we want to give to them some of what they give to us. They share our hardships with us as well as our joys, and they make us laugh.

They enable us to be our best selves.

All relationships need work if they are to flourish, and it's the same with our relationship with God. How often do you pray? Why do you pray? What might you need to change in order to have the kind of friendly relationship with God that Abraham had? ■

SAY

"Lord, I know you are close to me and that you love me. Thank you for giving me what I need. Amen."

LEARN

Prayer is about our relationship with God

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian way of life

The Christian trusts in the Lord, even when the Lord doesn't seem to answer our prayer or answer as we would wish