

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

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, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance. 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 Wisdom 9:13-18

A reading from the book of Wisdom. What man can know the intentions of God? Who can divine the will of the Lord? The reasonings of mortals are unsure and our intentions unstable; for a perishable body presses down the soul, and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind. It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth, laborious to know what lies within our reach; who, then, can discover what is in the heavens? As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not granted Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from above? Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened and men been taught what pleases you, and saved, by Wisdom. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM Psalm 89

Response: **O Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to the next.**

1. You turn men back into dust and say: "Go back, sons of men." To your eyes a thousand years

are like yesterday, come and gone, no more than a watch in the night. (R.)

- 2. You sweep men away like a dream, like grass which springs up in the morning. In the morning it springs up and flowers: by evening it withers and fades. (R.)
- 3. Make us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart. Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever? Show pity to your servants. (R.)
- 4. In the morning, fill us with your love; we shall exult and rejoice all our days. Let the favour of the Lord be upon us: give success to the work of our hands. (R.)

SECOND READING Philemon 9-10, 12-17

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Philemon. This is Paul writing, an old man now and, what is more, still a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for a child of mine, whose father I became while wearing these chains: I mean Onesimus. I am sending him back to you, and with him – I could say – a part of my own self. I should have liked to keep him with me; he could have been a substitute for you, to help me while I am in the chains that the Good News has brought me. However, I did not want to do anything without your consent; it would have been forcing your act of kindness, which should be spontaneous. I know you have been deprived of Onesimus for a time, but it was only so that you could have him back for ever, not as a slave any more, but something much better than a slave, a dear brother; especially dear to me, but how much more to you, as a blood-brother as well as a brother in the Lord. So if all that we have in common means anything to you, welcome him as you would me. 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 Luke 14:25-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. "If any man comes to me without leaving his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. "And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, 'Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish.' Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a

long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions."

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

O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that, through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.



Sunday Message

THE WORD



We all know the importance of good planning. If you're doing an exam and have to answer five questions in two hours, you need to calculate how much time to give to each question.

If you're going somewhere by car, you need to ensure you have enough petrol, especially when travelling in the countryside at night.

It happened to me a few years ago. I headed west late one evening with the petrol tank less than half full. I told myself there was enough to reach my destination. But then, as the clock wound past midnight and forecourts closed for the night, the gauge on my dashboard kept creeping towards empty. I began to fret. I worried that the car would grind to a halt in the middle of nowhere, and I'd be stuck like an idiot in a crisis of my own making. All I had needed to do was top up the tank before I left, but I'd been too lazy. I had taken a risk. I crawled to my destination with the amber light flashing insistently.

Good planning is essential if we don't want to miscalculate and mess up. Good planning is what Jesus is talking about in today's Gospel. If you're going to follow him, he says, you need to calculate precisely what that means. You need to be clear as to what it entails. You need to know what you're committing yourself to because it won't be easy.

Being his follower will involve making tough decisions and hard choices. It will mean taking up your cross every day. It may even include laying down your life.

Jesus uses an extreme example to make his point. Choosing him, he says, means putting him before your nearest and dearest, even your own family. It means putting him first in everything, whatever the consequences.

Like someone building a tower or a king going out to war, we must calculate what we are getting ourselves into. We must approach it with eyes wide open. ■

REFLECT

For most of us, following Jesus doesn't mean risking our lives or going against our family. Still, putting Jesus first is risky because it means going against the grain. It means doing things that the cool people think are foolish.

Some time ago, a 16-year-old second-level student submitted an essay to our office about the challenge of being a young Catholic today. Sean wrote about going on a retreat with his grandfather and how it led to a deepening of his faith. He used to go to Mass until then but was a bit embarrassed about his religion. It wasn't a full-on commitment. Now that had changed. This is a section of his essay:

I returned home from the retreat refreshed and with a newfound determination not to compartmentalise my faith anymore, but to let it affect

everything I did. I wanted to bear witness to Christ, not by making grandiose declarations about religion – that only alienates others – but by humbly going about my business with a consistent prayer life in the knowledge that God will show the way.

I faced several challenges to my faith in the past year in school. After the retreat, I decided I'd never again fail to attend Sunday Mass. This had often occurred during school trips away where the group mentality amongst the students didn't entertain the idea of Mass on such occasions. I was too afraid to open my mouth on those trips, so I didn't go either.

But things had changed. My resolve was tested when our class won a trip to France. Two weeks before we left, I politely explained to the teacher that if I

DO

Calculate the cost of discipleship and measure it against your life right now; measure it against all you hold dear. Are you willing to stick your neck out for the Gospel? Are you all-in?

PRAY

Pray for Christians everywhere, especially those who risk their lives every day for the sake of the Gospel.



SAY

Lord, help me to follow you to the best of my ability. Help me to always put you first. Amen.

LEARN

The true disciple puts Jesus Christ and his teaching above everything else.

To follow Jesus faithfully is the wisest calculation any person can make.

Religion is not a hobby, a private concern – like golf or yoga or football. Everything we do must be at the service of God's kingdom.

couldn't attend Mass, then I couldn't go on the trip. Later, when the class heard we'd all be attending Mass in Paris, there was some grumbling directed towards me – thankfully, most of it in good humour. We ended up in Notre Dame, and although I couldn't understand a word, the mystique and beauty was something else. Even some of my friends admitted they'd enjoyed the experience.

During this past year, through God's grace, I've already gone from being afraid to talk about my faith to writing articles about it. To anyone who struggles with faith, I'd say, don't give up; keep persevering! Look for God with a courageous heart and an open mind, and you'll always succeed.

Sean calculated the cost of discipleship and was prepared to pay it. The challenge for each of us is to do likewise. ■