

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

PENITENTIAL ACT

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**
You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**
You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**
May almighty God have mercy on us... **Amen**

THE 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.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.....

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING *Joshua 24:1-2; 15-18*

A reading from the book of Joshua

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem; then he called the elders, leaders, judges and scribes of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. Then Joshua said to all the people: 'If you will not serve the Lord, choose today whom you wish to serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.'

The people answered, 'We have no intention of deserting the Lord our God and serving other gods. Was it not the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, who worked those great wonders before our eyes and preserved us all along the way we travelled and among all the peoples through whom we journeyed? We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God.'

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *P.S. 33:2-3.16-23*

R. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips; in the Lord my soul shall make its boast. The humble shall hear and be glad. **[R]**
2. The Lord turns his face against the wicked to destroy their remembrance from the earth. The Lord turns his eyes to the just and his ears to their appeal. **[R]**
3. They call and the Lord hears and rescues them in all their distress. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save. **[R]**
4. Many are the trials of the just man but from them all the Lord will rescue him. He will keep guard over all his bones, not one of his bones shall be broken. **[R]**
5. Evil brings death to the wicked; those who hate the good are doomed. The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants. Those who hide in him shall not be condemned. **[R]**

SECOND READING *Ephesians 5:25-32 (shorter form)*

A reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians

Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body - and we are its living parts. For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life: your word has the message of eternal life. Alleluia!

GOSPEL *John 6:60-69*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

After hearing his doctrine many of the followers of Jesus said, 'This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?' Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, 'Does this upset you? What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before? 'It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.



focus on sunday

TWENTY - FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 25th August 2024

God gives us the freedom of choice. He forces no one to obey him. He leaves us free. Our world is full of contradictory voices and false prophets. May we not be led astray. Only Jesus can give us eternal life.



It is the spirit that gives life



Many people today are searching for meaning in a world full of pain and suffering, which appears to be without purpose and is instead ruled by chaos. Many

find little meaning even in their own personal lives. In times past, the Church provided meaning and still does for some, particularly older people who have lived their lives in a society in which the Church had a central role. But many too have walked away, saying the Church is irrelevant to their lives. The Church must accept some blame for this. Like many older people, I was led to believe that obeying the laws of the Church determined my relationship with God. A personal relationship with God was replaced by an insistence on obeying laws. The Church was not preaching Christianity, it was preaching Church-ianity. Any relationship must be nourished by regular contact, where people share with and listen to each other. Otherwise the relationship fades away and dies. When Peter said, "To whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life," he wasn't expressing a rational conclusion that his mind had reached. He was expressing his personal relationship to Jesus built over many months, possibly even several years, while in His company. Our faith is not just an acceptance of truths which we believe. If our following of Jesus is not built on a personal relationship with Him, nourished by prayer and Eucharist, then we, too, are in danger of falling away when difficulties arise.

Fr. Peter McVerry